

SOCCER

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GST INCLUSIVE

QUEENSLAND WARFARE

By Mark Stavroulakis

Things are heating up in sunny Queensland with two clubs clashing head to head in gaining that valuable spot from the Sunshine Coast area in next season's Australian Premier League.

Both the Brisbane Strikers and Queensland Lions have locked horns in wanting entry to the new revolution of Australian football.

Having raised the stakes, current QLD Premier League giants Queensland Lions hired the services of former Brisbane Broncos and Melbourne Storm supremo John Ribot as one of the clubs advisors.

Known for being one of the main players in Rugby League's Super League concept a couple of years back, Ribot brings together extensive knowledge on building a squad for the future.

The Lions bid though will be met by the traditional Brisbane Strikers who have stated to the media that they will not be fazed by such key announcements from their main competitors. When asked about the reaction of the Ribot signing, Strikers chief executive Steve Wilson was not in any way fearful.

"There was no great surprise in the announcement. It was something we would have expected from an organisation that hasn't participated at the national level for so many years" he said, adding that the Lions probably needed the advice of someone with Ribot's experience after sixteen seasons out of the top flight.

The Strikers board have been considering several options for how to proceed with the club's bid and one of those options involves assigning people with the appropriate profile and expertise to assist with the bid if necessary. ASA's expressions of interest documentation is scheduled to be released tomorrow (Wednesday 21 April), whereby the Strikers will then announce their forthcoming intentions on the new league.

Rumours from the Sunshine capital suggested that the Strikers were to change its entire identity including their name to the 'Brisbane Lightning'.

Wilson though dispelled this as pure speculation and stated that the club has no intentions of changing the current identity of the Strikers due to its valuable history that included premiership and finals appearances.

It will be a keen few weeks that will divide Queensland soccer fans, as there can only be one representative from that allocated area.

Queensland Lions or the Brisbane Strikers, read on page 4 for more details regarding this stinging issue.

This isn't the only battle that a certain state is battling in gaining that valuable spot.

Newcastle United along with a new bid being put together by the Northern Spirit up at the Central Coast has caused concerns over how close both sides will be if both were accepted.

Newcastle have gained the green light and will feature however the strong Spirit bid could too gain a surprise entry.

Meanwhile, speculation has come forward that the eight-team competition next July could well turn to ten-sides.

Many sides have expressed their concerns over an 8-team competition and have stated that adding two more teams will be more appropriate for the APL model to succeed.

CENTRAL COAST TO FEATURE IN APL

Exclusive story By Peter Damalas

The New South Wales Central Coast is set to be included in the make up of the inaugural Australian Premier League next year.

Members of the consortium of business people, called Spirit Sports & Leisure Group, are confident that the proposal for entry into the new national competition will be accepted, as a business plan has been developed and financial backers are already on the plate.

The consortium has been met with a great deal of interest from the Central Coast Soccer Association, while three northern Sydney districts—Gladesville-Hornsby, Manly-Warringah and Kuring-gai—will also be included in the club's geographic borders.

On top of expressions of interest from these communities, spokesperson Brian Sewell stated that major corporations and businesses have been attracted by the proposal, with more announcements to be made this week.



Lawrie McKinna will lead the Pacific Spirit hopefully in the APL next season.

"We have a range of corporate partners, private equity investors and some of Australia's leading business people committed to the success of this. You'll be surprised who we have on the team," he said in a press release.

The emphasis in this foundation stage is on club identity. The Central Coast and the northern suburbs of Sydney has remained a region largely untapped by national sporting bodies, and this club will seek

to capitalise on the absence of elite sport in the area.

"Through our corporate partners and associates we will be able to provide top-level travel, entertainment, financial services and the development of lifestyle and sporting infrastructure. It's an exciting time for football," he said.

Research conducted into the venture has revealed that the local support base consists of more than 50,000 registered players.

Consortium member Jerry Ratterman believes that the club will have a sufficient fan base and is confident that the region is sustainable.

This will be the first national sporting club based entirely on the Central Coast, with home matches to be played at the Express Advocate Stadium (formerly known as Graham Park), which has previously hosted National Rugby League matches (the Northern Eagles played half of their home fixtures there) and Rugby World Cup clashes.

(Continued On Page 3)

Crook Ends Newcastle Tenure

Venables and Rush named as possible replacements?



'Calling it a day': Ian Crook has parted company as Newcastle's head coach after three seasons at the helm.

By Mark Stavroulakis

After three solid seasons in the now defunct National Soccer League, Newcastle United has parted company with Coach Ian Crook.

The news of his departure was officially announced last Thursday however ABSW had written this announcement weeks back.

Known for blooding in youth, Crook played an inspirational part in developing future stars for the Australian game at Energy Australia Stadium.

Up to six youngsters made their National League debuts this season under Crook, all of who were under the age of 20.

The 41-year-old has had a rather extensive playing career and Australia was fortunate enough to have attained the services of the London-born manager.

Playing as an apprentice for Tottenham then moving onto to Norwich City, Crook was also capped by the English National Squad.

In his three seasons at the club, Crook took Newcastle to two NSL finals in his first two years before suffering a disappointing season this year.

One monumental achievement the Englishman will not forget in a hurry was being honoured with the NSL's Coach of the Year award in his first season as Newcastle's coach in season 2001/02.

It is believed that Newcastle is firm favourites in landing an APL spot in the eight-team competition which kick's off next July/August.

Due to the amount of juniors playing their football in the Northern NSW region along with the clubs professionalism, ASA will be assured that they will encounter no problems with the Novocastrian contingent.

Close sources to the club have stated that two high profile names could take the place of Crook.

Already mentioned in ABSW, former

England and Soccerroo Coach Terry Venables has been a possible target while former Liverpool great Ian Rush has also been mentioned as a possible replacement for the number one job.

Attracting the supporters to the round ball game is something Newcastle chairman wishes to do and with the help of a high profile coach along with some big name players, this could be achieved.

Currently battling for the sporting limelight with Rugby League side the Newcastle Knights, its not been that easy of a task in kick-starting a soccer team in what has appeared to be a League stronghold area.

Newcastle chairman Con Constantine flew to England some months back in a bid to stage positive talks with high profile managers and players in aiding his side for the new APL competition next year.

There has been no news as to what Crook will do in the next year or so but his name was mentioned as a possible candidate for an Australian coaching spot some months back.

That however has all changed as current Joeys and Young Soccerroos coach Ange Postecoglou has signed an extended contract with the ASA until the end of his World Cup preparations with his respective squads.

Ian Crook though will be involved in the Australian game in some way, what that maybe still remains a mystery.



NSW MEMBERS TO HAVE SAY ON BID

Turn to Page 23 for the low-down



Crescent Star's Orhan Dincer (front) in full flight against Blacktown City's Paul Karbon

8 Page NSW Lift-out
*NSW Premier League reports and stats
*NSW Winter Super League
*Full coverage on all NSW Youth grades

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Two of Perth Glory's rising stars left Australian shores last week bound for trials with English First Division club West Ham United. Olyroo star Jade North and former Australian youth international Wayne Srhoj will embark on a 14 day trial in proving their worth to Hammers officials.

West Ham United are currently in the process of challenging hard for a promotion back into the top flight after they were relegated from last season.

Glory chief executive Jeff Dennis stated to the 'West Australian', "We have an understanding with all of our players that we will not stand in their way if they want to better themselves.

"As long as we know what they are doing, and as long as it is out of our playing season, they go with our approval."

North has been in impressive form for the Glory this year and was certainly a stand-out in Mich d'Avray's championship winning squad.

His performances for the Olyroos at the this years Oceania Qualifiers earned him player of the tournament by many journalists present at Marconi Stadium.

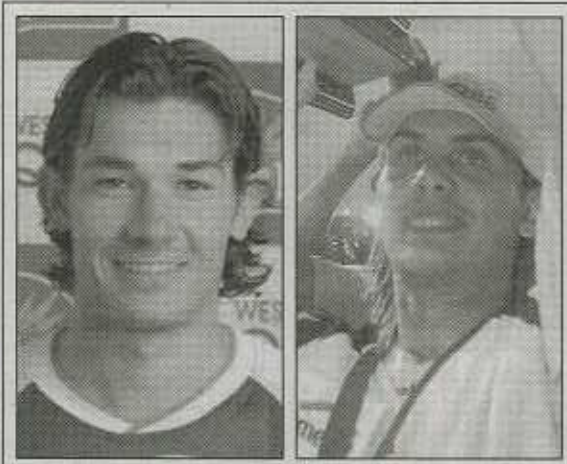
Jade will surely be one of Farina's essential starting eleven squad members and don't be surprised if you see the dreadlocked star in a Socceroos jersey for the World Cup qualifiers at the end of the year.

Already capped four times of the Socceroos, north certainly leads the way as being one of Australia's finest ever youth stars.

Srhoj however has not had a good season to his standards.

Arriving from the Olympic Sharks this season, a thigh injury hampered the midfielder's progress to the rep.

Srhoj hopes that this trial and hopeful selection for the Hammers could entice Farina to choose him for the Olyroo



West Ham bound for both Wayne Srhoj (left) & Jade North.

squad bound for the Olympics in August.

Both players have followed similar paths on their success to the top flight of the Australian game.

The pair both were part of the QAS set-up before signing with the Brisbane Strikers.

After their initial debuts in the Strikers squad, the Olympic Sharks snapped up the Queensland trio.

From then on it was off to Perth.

West Ham have forged some

aussiesabroad

BY DANIEL KUZIW

★ ★ ★ ★

link-up with the Glory as Richard Garcia, the WA-born striker, plays for West Ham and David Tarka was expected to join the club last year, but went to fellow division one side Nottingham Forest.

*Source Mark Stavroulakis

★ ★ ★ ★

Struggling Malaysian Super League side Penang are all set to sign former Sydney Olympic striker Pablo Cardozo until the end of the season.

Cardozo will become the fourth import for Penang.

According to Penang FA secretary Mohd Junid Mohd Noor, Pablo needed to acclimatise himself with the humid conditions and had asked for time to get himself fit and ready before going through fitness tests.

"He is going back to Australia and will return in two weeks' time.

"He told us he will be ready for the test by then," Mohd Junid stated to the 'Rait Times'.

Cardozo should be able to past the fitness test and will play out the entire second round of the league.

Coach Yunas Alif and the FA management team are quite impressed with the former Olympic's strikers performance during his week-long stay in Penang for trials and despite their financial situation, have decided to sign the Aussie for the club.

Cardozo could play alongside Russian striker Viatcheslav Melnikov upfront to strengthen Penang's attack.

Penang's two other foreign imports are attacking midfielder and former Melbourne Knights player Boris Ovcin and Romanian central defender Cristian Teodor.

Middlesbrough is set to make a firm bid for Parma midfielder Marco Bresciano this week, according to reports in Italy.

The 24-year-old Australian international is reputed to have caught the eye of Boro scouts throughout the season and, most recently, during a friendly international against South Africa at QPR's Loftus Road.

Several other Premiership clubs have been linked with Bresciano, who joined Parma after helping Empoli win promotion to Serie A.

He is understood to have been highly recommended to Boro by striker Massimo Maccarone, a fellow member of that Empoli side and fellow Aussie, goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer.

★ ★ ★ ★

Oldham boss Brian Talbot praised keeper Les Pogliacomi after his outstanding performance secured a 1-1 draw at Stockport.

The result leaves the Latics just two points clear of the drop zone but Talbot insists it could have been much worse had it not been for the Pogliacomi's display.

"I think we have to thank our goalkeeper for the point we got. He was first class. I thought he produced five fantastic saves but Stockport weren't good enough to score past him," Talbot admitted.

"Overall I think Stockport will be disappointed they didn't get three points. But it was poor play to let them back into the game from a set-piece. That was disappointing."

★ ★ ★ ★

Feyenoord are using their links with feeder club Westerlo to assess the merits of Marconi's Alex Brosque.

The promising forward will front Westerlo's reserves under the gaze of Feyenoord, who struck up a relationship with the Belgian side last month.

As part of the co-operation, players will arrive at Westerlo on trial and Brosque is among the first batch of footballers bidding to impress Feyenoord.

Brosque has already represented Australia and was again named as this season's NSL under 21 Player of the year.

It is understood though that Brosque has signed a three-year-deal and has been handed an apartment and car along with his deal.

★ ★ ★ ★

Hibernian boss Bobby Williamson has refused to be drawn on the future of Australian trialist Iain Fyfe.

Williamson has a policy of not discussing potential signings and this has again proved

the case with Fyfe.

"I look at trialists all year round but I won't talk about them until we sign them," Williamson told the Edinburgh Evening News.

The defender is set to spend at least a week at Easter Road, in a bid to impress the Hibs chief.

Fyfe has previously been on trial at Leeds United, after catching the eye of then manager Terry Venables, who was aware of the player since his time as the Australian national team coach.

Due to a restructuring of the Australian league, Fyfe has been released from his contract and would be able to sign for the SPL club immediately.

He would also not be required to apply for a work permit as he is already a British passport holder.

★ ★ ★ ★

Adrian Madaschi has been called up to the Australia under-23 side for the game against Tunisia on Wednesday 28th April as they continue their preparation for the Olympics.

Speaking to the official site the defender said: "I am delighted. I thought the first game went very well and to be involved in a second game is very important to me. It is another step on the way to try to get myself into the Olympic squad which would be an unbelievable achievement for me and I hope to be involved and be able to impress the management with a view to the final selection. As I have said earlier it would be a great thrill to be selected to go to Athens in August."

★ ★ ★ ★

Man of the moment Tim Cahill last week was named the Football Association FA Cup Player of the Round.

Cahill scored Millwall's winner as they defeated Sunderland 1-0 in their semi-final match at Old Trafford.

The Australian international polled 47% of the vote, which was conducted on the FA's website, beating off the challenge from three other players.

The other Millwall player on the list was Darren Ward, while Manchester United duo Paul Scholes and Wes Brown comprised the other two names in the frame.

Meanwhile Cahill could be faced with a tough club or country dilemma if Millwall reach the First Division play-off final this season.

The hero of Millwall's FA Cup semi-final win over Sunderland at Old Trafford waited nine years to make his debut for Australia.

Cahill appeared as a substitute against South Africa last month and is now in the squad for their World Cup qualifiers this summer.

But Australia begin their

campaign on 28 May, the day before the play-off final.

The Socceroos must qualify from a group of six Oceania nations in Australia to reach a play-off next year against South American opposition.

But Cahill is unlikely to choose potential matches against the likes of Tonga and Fiji over the chance to reach the Premiership at The Millennium Stadium.

★ ★ ★ ★

Hull City striker Danny Allsopp last week paid tribute to partner-in-crime Ben Burgess and pledged their double act could only get better.

The pair have grabbed 33 goals between them this season to play a vital role in City's impressive march towards a promotion place.

Burgess scored his 18th goal of the campaign following a dazzling double in the 3-2 win at Swansea, while Allsopp was also on target at Vetch Field to take his tally to 15.

With five games to go, there's plenty of speculation about who will finish the season as the Tigers' leading goalscorer. Allsopp, though, is only concerned about helping City clinch promotion and is full of praise for Burgess.

He told www.thisishull.com: "I don't really care who gets the most goals, just as long as we go up."

"Ben has done really well all season and it's great playing alongside him. He doesn't just score goals, he makes them as well. He works so hard for the team. He's good for me and hopefully he'd tell you I've helped him out a fair bit as well."

They teamed up together following their respective £100,000 moves from Notts County and Stockport towards the end of last season and it has proved to be money well spent.

He added: "We've worked hard and the understanding is improving all the time. I'm sure we can get better."

Allsopp's performance at Swansea showed he is back to his sharpest following a spell on the sidelines with a groin injury.

He explained: "I had a decent chance just before my goal. I saw the keeper coming out. The ball bounced in front of me and I had to stretch to get to it. I thought it was going in but it went wide."

"I didn't let it bother me and soon after, I got another chance. This time, I managed to stick it away. I needed the goal and it helped us on the way to an important win."



CENTRAL COAST TO FEATURE IN APL

(Continued from front page)

With a capacity of 20,000, and including corporate boxes and facilities, the ground is certainly within the guidelines set by the Australian Soccer Association.

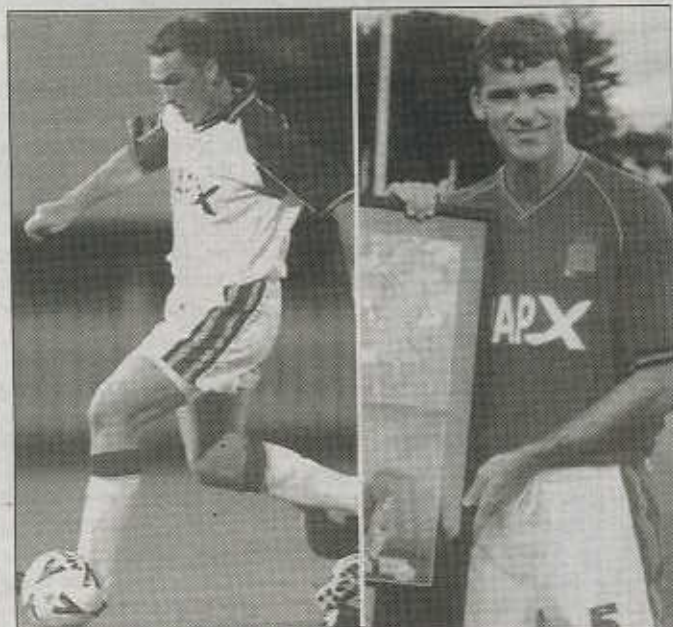
Managing Director of the stadium, Monique Marks said: "It's been designed with soccer and other football codes in mind. It's a world-class sporting facility that would meet the ASA's requirements."

Players and staff of the club would also have access to facilities such as an Olympic swimming pool, gymnasium and sports medicine clinic, while team training will take place in parts of northern Sydney as well as the Central Coast.

On paper at least, the club will resemble the Northern Spirit, whose coach Lawrie McKinna has already been recruited. Former Rangers midfielder Ian Ferguson, and recently retired former Soccerroo captain Alex Tobin, will assist McKinna in the coaching role.

Tobin is currently involved with his new player agent role that could see the former Soccerroo signing some promising stars under his new stable.

The 2002/03 NSL Coach of the Year is delighted that he will have the opportunity to work with practically the same group of players that he has



Both Ian Ferguson and Alex Tobin will be part of the new Spirit venture in the APL next season.

coached in the last two seasons of the National Soccer League, and he too is confident that the proposed venture will be accepted.

With Sydney and Newcastle allotted one position each in the eight team competition, the Central Coast club will apply as the remaining expression of interest.

The APL will comprise of one team each from Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Newcastle, New

Zealand, Perth, Sydney plus one extra.

"The proposal is very strong, it will be hard for [ASA] to know it back," he said.

Planning had commenced approximately eighteen months ago, but the dire financial straits experienced by Northern Spirit in 2003/04 meant that the venture made a quicker than expected arrival.

"[The consortium] helped the club

financially. Without their support, Northern Spirit would not have finished the season," McKinna said.

While McKinna said that he would like the APL competition to be expanded into ten or twelve teams, he remains positive that the nine month lay-off will benefit the game in the long term.

"If it means I'm out of a job for a while, then I'm up for it. ASA have been criticised for not giving information out, but I think they are doing their homework first before releasing details," he said.

The major concern however, surrounds the structuring of players and staff contracts. There is a degree of uncertainty about whether the new APL ventures will be asked to contract players from July 1, 2004, considering the only on field action will be the warm-up tournament set to start in January.

At this early stage, the name of the team is Pacific Spirit, although this is subject to change. The official name will be announced after a competition is held.

Given the absence of top flight soccer in Australia, the club plans to hold an international invitational tournament to be played at Gosford, involving the likes of Perth Glory, Adelaide United and Newcastle, as an annual promotional exercise.

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FARINA HOPEFUL INJURED DUO WILL PLAY TURKEY

Soccerroo coach Frank Farina is hopeful Rangers defender Craig Moore (pictured right) and Birmingham City midfielder Stan Lazaridis will be okay to take on Turkey next month, despite them both expected to miss the remainder of the domestic season with their respective clubs.

Moore has been troubled by a knee injury for most of the season and needs minor surgery, while Lazaridis tore his groin muscle last weekend and it is still unclear as to how serious it is.

"Craig (Moore) is having an arthroscopy to see if there are any issues," said Farina. "But all indications are its not going to be a major problem and he will be available for Turkey."

"Stan Lazaridis is not as bad as first feared and he could be back towards the end of the year. So I don't think there is any reason why we would be unavailable for the Soccerroo games."

Farina confirmed he would be picking his strongest available squad for the two games on Friday May 21 (Sydney) and Monday May 24 (Melbourne) and the

Oceania Nations Cup/World Cup qualifying matches a week later.

While some players may still have club commitments, the majority of the Farina's Soccerroo stars should be available with most of the major leagues, including England and Italy, finishing the weekend before the two games against Turkey.

While the matches against Turkey, ranked number 8 in the latest FIFA rankings, are two high quality friendly games, Farina main priority is the OFC Nations Cup/World Cup qualifiers.

Farina insists any players unavailable for the Turkey will still be in contention for the Cup that will be held in Australia, which is yet to be confirmed but most likely will be in Adelaide.

The Soccerroo coach also confirmed that his preference at the OFC Nations Cup is to play its main rival New Zealand first up rather than at the end of the tournament.

"You've got to play them at some stage and I think coming off the back of two tough games against Turkey, we'll be in pretty good stead," said Farina.

The tournament is also act-

ing as the qualifiers (second stage) for the 2006 FIFA World Cup, with the top two progressing to the Oceania Nations Cup final (October 2004) plus the Oceania World Cup Qualifying Play-off (third stage) in September 2005.

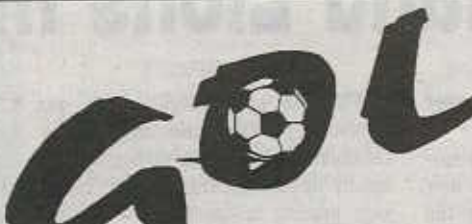
In other news, Farina is not likely to name any bolters for the Under 23 match against Tunisia in Monastir on Wednesday 28 April 2004.

The match is vital preparation for the Athens Olympics in August and Farina indicated that the bulk of the squad would be from those players that played against Greece last month, while the likes of Ahmad Elrich, Michael Beauchamp, Jade North and Wayne Srhoj will be considered after missing the match because of the NSL Grand Final.

Captain Ljubo Milicevic is still missing after failing to recover from the injury he picked up at the qualifiers in Sydney last January.

Straight after the Tunisia game 20 local-based players will then go into a two-week camp at the Australian Institute of Sport.

Source - ASA Website


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MILICIC ENJOYING PAHANG EXPERIENCE

Australia's most valuable player this year, ex-Power striker Ante Milicic has so far been enjoying the fruits of Malaysian football.

Currently playing for Pahang in the MSL (Malaysian Super League), the clubs supporters and officials have been impressed with Milicic's professionalism.

The desire for a new challenge was what brought motivation to Ante's decision in playing for Pahang - that and the fact that the new APL won't kick start until next June/July.

"I have achieved everything I wanted to in Australia and that is why I decided to play in Malaysia," said Milicic in Kuantan last week.

"I have won many honours in Australia and have played at the highest level in Europe.

"Now, I am looking for a new challenge and hope to win something in Asia. Pahang are a very strong side and offer that possibility," he added.

English-born coach Ron Smith, who has been coaching successfully at club (Johor FC) and international level in Malaysia since leaving his duties as AIS' head coach believes that Milicic will



Enjoying his Malaysian experience so far - Ante Milicic

reap the benefits of the MSL.

"Players like Ante will be asked to make a decision whether or not they wish to stay at the club when the new APL league starts. Contracts over in Malaysia especially for foreigners are quite lucrative, and I think that would be one of the main reasons why Australian players would stay on in the league".

The 30-year old is Pahang's fourth foreign player at the club but has stated that he has signed

until the end of the year pending on a negotiation on getting a contract extension.

Taking out this year's Warren Medal for an outstanding season with the Power, Milicic could gain an international call-up by Frank Farina with the two international fixtures against Turkey in late May.

Many pundits believe that the gun striker still has what it takes to wear the Green and Gold jersey once more.

BRISBANE STRIKERS WANT QLD SPOT



The gloves have come off after the QLD Lions hit the media waves last week as being Queensland's representative in the new Australian Premier League next season.

The board of the Brisbane Strikers Football Club welcomed the Australian Soccer Association's announcement of a number of significant initiatives for the development and promotion of soccer in Australia but had strong belief they were to be the only club from the Sunshine Coast.

Chairman Dr Clem Jones AO said, "the Strikers stand squarely behind the Australian Soccer Association in their develop-

ment plans to re-vitalise Soccer in Australia".

He said that he confidently expects the Brisbane Strikers to be the Queensland team playing in the revamped National Competition to begin in 2005. "We will have top players, top coaches, and the finance necessary, whatever the requirements of the Expression of Interest document".

Clem Jones went on to say, "We have already established the fundamental requirements for back up, with the establishment of a National Youth team. It was a costly exercise, but well worth while, as has been all of the other associated coaching and training facilities for young Soccer players which we inaugurated during last Season".

Following a successful 2003/2004 season where the Strikers qualified for the top 6 final series, the Club is currently concentrating on the continued development of its facilities at Perry Park, and the recently acquired Meakin Park complex.

A number of players have been released to local clubs to

play in the Premier League competition which is due to commence shortly. This helps lift the standard of the local competition, and provides the players the opportunity to continue playing during the off season period.

Dr Jones said, "The Strikers will welcome the opportunity to apply for admission to the new national competition.

"The development of our facilities at Perry Park and Meakin Park will allow further support of soccer in our community, and continue to provide a platform for local talent to receive the training and development required to make the transition to national and international competition."



Queensland Lions make first major market move

(Thanks to Tribalfutbol.com)

The first major move by consortiums seeking entry to the new APL has been made ... by the Queensland Lions.

While Soccer NSW announced their formal bid last week and the Victorian Soccer Federation declared their interest, the one move to make waves in the mainstream media was the Lions' appointment of former Melbourne Storm and Brisbane Broncos chief John Ribot as an advisor.

Ribot brings to the Lions the credibility and profile that Australia SA chief executive John O'Neill is demanding from all new clubs. The media immediately recognised this, with the appointment being reported in all the states' major newspapers on Sunday.

This is what we all hope the APL can deliver. Quality names with credibility and profile that reach beyond the tiny 'soccer audience' the game has been fighting over for the past 25 years.

The Lions pipped NRL and AFL interest for Ribot, who admitted that he was drawn to the Queensland club partly because of O'Neill and John Singleton's new association with the game. You can bet that Ribot's name also will in the future be mentioned by major big-hitters as they 'switch codes'.

Forgive us if we're a little underwhelmed by last week's talk of State-led consortiums bidding for licences.

O'Neill's vision of a new club competition is an exciting proposition. In the new ASA chief executive, we finally have someone who has acknowledged that the club game at NSL level is "part of the entertainment industry" and if we're to go toe-to-toe with Australia's biggest sports, a "wow factor" must be signed and sealed before the new league's kickoff.

Which is why O'Neill's plan was embraced by the mainstream media. Columnists in the big city dailies, who are usually discussing AFL or NRL issues, were praising the push of O'Neill and Frank Lowy's new board. The same could be heard on commercial talkback radio. Finally, it appears, we are on the verge of another genuine sporting revolution in Australia. Where NRL, ARU and the AFL have ventured, it is now the time for football to break the shackles of the past.

But the virtually non-existent response of the mainstream media to talk of State-led bids to the new league is a warning to O'Neill that the wider sporting public simply won't warm to this.

For the general sports fan, the State

Federations are on the nose. They're part of the established 'soccer clique' and rightly or wrongly the perception exists that they're well behind their sporting cousins in terms of credibility and know-how.

Trotting out 'SBS personalities' and expecting to energise the market is simply a non-starter. Even the talk coming from Soccer NSW and the Victorian Soccer Federation appears to be watering down the expectations that were thrust forward by O'Neill.

Where O'Neill's vision is about filling the likes of Telstra Dome, the NSW and Victorian bids were targeting the more modest 15-25,000 home crowds. Those in favour in the football media cited the example of Adelaide United.

But United's powerbrokers are using last season's success at Hindmarsh Stadium as only a springboard to bigger things. Tribalfutbol.com knows the club are already sending out feelers for big-name imports and also major Australian names that have a high recognition with the Adelaide public.

Recruiting ex-pat Aussies and improving the playing list will help United fill Hindmarsh stadium. But their board also recognises that glamour imports are needed if United are to shake up the state's television ratings. That's the crucial battle for the new APL.

O'Neill has blue chip sponsors lined up, but they won't get on-board unless the new 'Super-8' comp can deliver competitive TV ratings. That means reaching the wider sporting public - which can only be done by generating excitement with big names who can 'glam up' things on the pitch, while those off it bring a high-profile credibility to the game's administration.

Adelaide United know this and are

pressing forward - you can expect the same from Perth Glory. The Lions have shown their ambition with Ribot's appointment, but the two biggest states - Victoria and NSW - have had a false start.

For all the ambitious planning that is going into Adelaide United's effort for next season, Sydney and Melbourne will have to double that - and then some.

Believing they can be a success with a state selection (in the Adelaide United mould), playing in front of 15,000 crowds just won't wash. If the state federations are only interested in appealing to their own, they will soon be in trouble.

It's important both Soccer NSW and the VSF do have a stake in their state's new

clubs. But headlining their push will be a battle they'll struggle to win.

Both states need greater credibility to reach beyond the current 'soccer watching' public. They will only gain that by taking a backseat and bringing in high profile names from business and sport to front their franchises.

The Aussie public are ready to embrace football, the media's reaction to O'Neill's vision is proof of this, but they need to be excited by our new clubs.

Football can be a game for all Australia, if our leaders want it to.

Meanwhile the Queensland Lions are financially a bigger club than both the AFL's Brisbane Lions and NRL's Brisbane Broncos, says chairman Lawrence Oudendyk.

The Lions have their own stadium and are cash rich thanks to four licenced clubs. They're the second biggest operator of poker machines in the state after the casino.

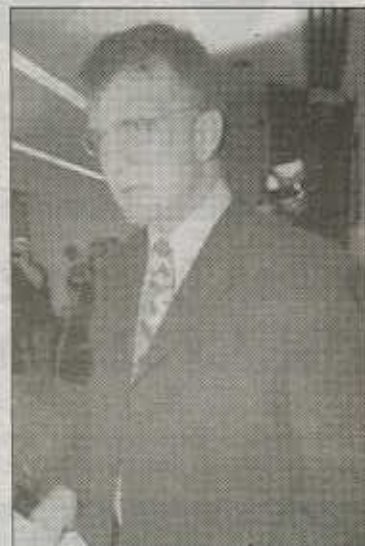
"We are much bigger than the Broncos and Brisbane Lions," Oudendyk told the Herald-Sun. "We've been working towards this for a while.

"We have a very strong business which is churning out big money; we're not dependant on some benefactor."

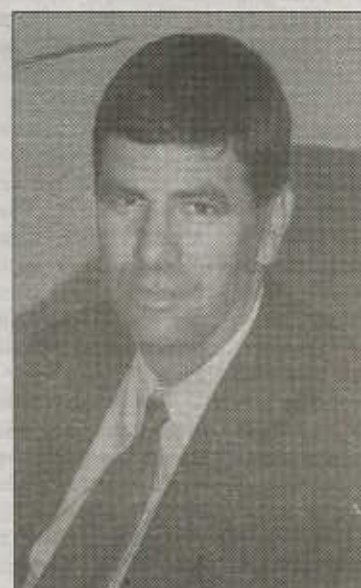
The Lions have appointed John Ribot as an advisor for their bid to get into the new APL.

"We're excited about getting John Ribot on board. He's experienced at getting new franchises into competitions, and he'll be going with us when we make our presentation in Sydney," added Oudendyk.

"He's interested because of the opportunities it might present, from a TV angle for example, but we're hoping he can stay on beyond the bid. We'd certainly like him to become involved on a full-time basis once we get in."



Leading the QLD Lions to the top: The club's new advisor for a hopeful APL entry former Melbourne Storm chief John Ribot.



Getting the QLD Lions into next year's APL has been C.E.O. Lawrence Oudendyk's dream for the past few seasons.

ASA APPOINT NEW PROMOTERS

The Australian Soccer Association (ASA) has appointed Saatchi & Saatchi to promote the upcoming international matches between the Socceroos and Turkey.

Played over two legs at Aussie Stadium in Sydney on Friday May 21 and the Telstra Dome in Melbourne on Monday May 24, the games represent the first opportunity for Australians to see the Socceroos live on home soil in more than two and a half years.

field against Turkey in Sydney and Melbourne, that we have full houses to urge the team to some good performances," Farina said.

The appointment of Saatchi & Saatchi to promote the Turkey games is another step forward in the ASA's commitment to improving the overall image of the game in Australia and ensuring the Socceroos' internationals gain the exposure they deserve.

Saatchi & Saatchi's Mark Green added,

SAATCHI & SAATCHI

Turkey are currently ranked ninth in the world having finished third in the last FIFA World Cup and are sure to provide the Socceroos with a tough work-out ahead of the OFC FIFA World Cup Qualifiers (stage 2) in late May and early June in Australia.

Socceroo coach Frank Farina believes we couldn't have got better opposition to test the Socceroos. "They will be two really great games and important preparation for the start of our qualification process for the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany 2006.

Our players are really looking forward to the games, as not only are they playing against one of the top teams in the world, but we are playing at home for the first time in several years.

I hope that when the players take to the

"We are delighted to be working with the new administration at the ASA on this project. This is an era of change and re-invigoration for Australian soccer and we are proud to play a part. Soccer in Australia has a lot going for it including the highest participation rate of all team sports and an incredibly strong squad of senior players in the Socceroos."

John O'Neill, CEO of ASA added, "The appointment of Saatchi & Saatchi for the two games reflects our intention to further professionalise the promotion of Socceroo internationals and will no doubt assist us in drawing great crowds for what promises to be very exciting fixtures, and provide additional value for our key sponsors such as Avaya, Nike and the Australian Sports Commission."

IS IT CURTAINS FOR SOUTH MELBOURNE?

One of Australia's most traditional and successful clubs South Melbourne could face extinction if their debts of up to \$1.5 million aren't meant in the next few weeks.

Players have currently started a revolt against the club and many have moved onto various Victorian Premier League squads and overseas sides.

Contracted until June 30th, it is believed that the players have only been paid up to March 20th thus overruling their contract agreements allowing them to play for their respective squads with ease.

Essendon Royals have strengthened their squad by picking up former Australian youth international Michael Curcija and keeper Dean Anastasiadis from South while youngsters Vince Lia and Massimo Murococa look certain to join overseas clubs very soon.

Michael Panopoulos, former Greek youth international who came to the club this year is currently on trials in Belgium.

South president Peter Mitrakas told the 'Herald Sun' the club was little hope of raising the funds needed to repay the debt before an early May deadline.

"We have ongoing expenses and no income to meet it with," he said glumly. "There has been between \$250,000 and \$300,000 pledged so far, and there's a lot of discussions going on (to raise more), but I do not think we will

be raising \$1 million quickly." The tax department is South Melbourne's biggest bill that is currently owed - in the vicinity of \$700,000 - and with South no chance of being accepted in to the new national league, the future appears bleak.



"I've had enough" - Mark Patterson has called it quits as CEO of Sth Melbourne.

"We've been all for change, but the next minute we find they don't want us, so there is disillusion among our community," Mitrakas added. Meanwhile, South chief executive Mark Patterson and the entire administrative staff have quit after not being paid for more than a month. "I'm assisting South Melbourne get through this difficult stage".

"We have ongoing expenses and no income to meet it with. There has been between \$250,000 and \$300,000 pledged so far, and there's a lot of dis-

cussions going on (to raise more), but I do not think we will be raising \$1 million quickly."

Patterson - who will stay on as a consultant and man the office on a short-term basis - declared.

South Melbourne did hold a rally for supporters and potential sponsors a few weeks back but no aid was given as only a marginal crowd turned up to help the club's fight from the brink of financial disaster.

Like so many now defunct NSL clubs, finances have been hard to juggle upon this year.

South Melbourne did put up a possible bid for next years APL but their bid looks in severe jeopardy after this latest scare.

It was believed that billionaire South Australian businessman Con Makris was set to take over the Blues but nothing has eventuated since then.

Also a consortium led by Melbourne businessmen was in the pipeline but that rumour has also dwindled away with possibly the hopes of many of the Blues faithful.

The Melbourne Victory, a Melbourne side led by the Victorian Soccer Federation and Melbourne United look the likely choices of being selected for the one spot designated to Victoria in June.

Established way back in 1959, Australia could lose one of the oldest clubs ever to take part in the Australian soccer league.

JAY LUCAS: The Next Mark Viduka?

By Mark Stavroulakis

Hailing from the sunny South Coast beaches of Wollongong, 18-year-old giant striker Jay Lucas has certainly come through many leaps and bounds during his professional footballing career.

Currently on tour with the Young Socceroos in France, Lucas has been part of English Premier League side Southampton's youth set-up for the past three seasons.

Signing a professional contract with the Saints at the age of 16, Jay has been somewhat of a mystery man to the Australian game since his early departure from the Wollongong Wolves.

Known as a traditional 'target man' through his sheer height (6ft 3 in-fact), the former Wolf from 'down under', has been likened to Socceroos star Mark Viduka by his team-mates and coaches at St Mary's.

His height advantage and ability to score goals were the main selling points that Southampton technical director Malcolm Ellis first spotted during his week's stay in Sydney.

During the U15 State Championships held at Parklea three seasons back, the youngster was asked, after the tournament, to take part in a two-week trial period at St Mary's on recommendation from Ellis.

The scout's tip-off was to be commended.

A possible rising star was noticed by the Saints hierarchy thus pushing Jay to sign a three-year deal in England which incidentally is up in June.

A marquee signing for the Saints, Lucas was part of

the U17 Joeys squad back in 2000 when he was one of the youngest members of the team that went to Trinidad & Tobago for the World Cup.

The past three years, Southampton has seen a rapid rise in the youngster's ability since his early induction in July 2001.

Holding up the ball well, his aerial strength and the ability to hold off players with his body have been assets the Saints have hit the jackpot on.

Australian youth coach Ange Postecoglou saw all this and more in Jay in choosing him during both his Joeys and Young Socceroos squads.

At the tender age of 16, the Aussie giant was part of the Saints U19's squad.

The year after that, he was playing reserves. "I've improved and learned a lot since joining the Saints, that's for sure, and training daily instead of three nights a week makes a massive difference in all areas of my game."

"It's good to be involved with the Reserves and play at big grounds like Leicester and Ipswich and, of course, St Mary's in Southampton. It's really been a dream of mine since a young boy to play in England and with the chance given to be at an early age, I hope to stay there for a while whichever club that may be," Lucas stated.

Not bad for a lad that regards surfing as part of his passionate pastimes.

Australian soccer followers did not get a full chance to witness Lucas in action during his days in the National League.

The Wollongong Wolves gave the youngster his debut back in season 2000/01 when he took on

Carlton as a 15-year-old and to this day still holds the club record of being the youngest ever player used in the Wolves strip.



The new 'Mark Viduka' of Australian soccer: Current Southampton Aussie striker Jay Lucas.

Coach at the time was former Socceroo Ron Corry who Lucas had to thank upon receiving his debut calling on the National League scale.

Captaining one of the Young Socceroos' matches in France last week, Lucas will be aiming to stay at the Saints upon his arrival after his international commitments have ceased.

High hopes have been pinned that Jay will get his contract extended however a number of high profile English and Scottish clubs have been waiting in arms over the possibility of attaining the young striker.

"At the moment I'm training and playing with the Saints and when I return from my international duties, I will decide on my future. I did want to get some game time at Stoke City before I left for France with the Young Roos but felt that staying with the Reds would have been better for my future progress at the club".

Lucas' rise to the top was interrupted abruptly at the start of this season due to a chronic knee injury but now knows that he is on the right track.

"It was tough to cop a knee injury at the start of the season but I haven't looked back since then. I did miss out a few months but it made me mentally tougher and got me in great physical shape. Now I am fully fit and 100% ready to tackle any obstacles".

Viduka or also known in the English press as the V-Bomber for his size and strength could soon find himself an identical partner up front.

In the words of the infamous 007 himself - they call him Lucas - Jay Lucas: a name that could be big in years to come.

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2003-04

A Testimonial for Stuart

A Testimonial Match between the Frankston Pines and the men's Victorian State Team was played out at Monterey Reserve on the weekend in recognition to Stuart Webster's long term service to the Pines.

Stuart's efforts in the goals have seen the club achieve promotion into Victorian Premier League. Following promotion the Pines have not only survived in the elite division of Victorian soccer, but also managed to establish itself as one of the powers of the VPL.

At the end of the day the Frankston Pines went down 2-1 to Victorian State Team in a match that was played in good spirits in front of a healthy crowd of about 400 people.

Perfect playing conditions saw the first half played at a relatively fast pace and the Victorian State Team enjoyed much of the possession. The State Team was hampered by a number of absences but those who played still managed to create a number of chances that gained them



Honoured for his services at the club, Stuart Webster shown before his testimonial match against the Victorian State team last week.

a goal mid way through the half. Just before half time the Pines levelled the score after a fast break

that caught the Victorian defence unaware.

Possession was much more even in the second half as the State Teams loosened the pressure. After a hard fought second half, the State Team regained the lead and kept it until the end to go home with a 2-1 victory.

Webster, who used to play in the Scottish domestic league has been a revelation for the club since joining the club ten seasons ago.

The custodian was inches from making South Melbourne's side this year but in previous seasons has been a target by various National League clubs.

Stan Webster, Stuart's father and coach at the Pines has been a keen admirer of the keeper and believes that he has come through leaps and bounds in establishing himself as one of the best goalkeepers in Victoria.

Having taken out last year's Victorian Premier League Goalkeeper of the Year, more could be expected in years to come by the man they call Webster!

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
1. Bulleen Zebras SC	9	6	1	2	16	9	19
2. Frankston Pines SC	9	6	1	2	10	4	19
3. Altona Magic SC	9	6	1	2	14	12	19
4. Green Gully Cavaliers SC	8	5	3	0	12	5	18
5. St Albans Saints SC	8	4	2	2	12	8	14
6. Preston Lions SC	8	4	2	2	8	6	14
7. Oakleigh Cannons SC	8	4	1	3	12	9	13
8. Essendon Royals SC	8	2	3	3	8	7	9
9. Whittlesea Stallions SC	8	1	2	5	12	16	5
10. Fawkner Blues SC	9	1	2	6	7	14	5
11. Bentleigh Greens SC	9	1	1	7	4	13	4
12. Knox City SC	9	1	1	7	7	19	4

Round 9 Results

Altona Magic 2	Bentleigh Greens 1
(Nick Waite, Cameron Pino)	(Evan Papadopoulos)
Fawkner Blues 0	Frankston Pines 1
	(Ricky Diaco)
Knox City 0	Bulleen Zebras 2
	(Peter Kakos, Costa Tsioukis)
St Albans Saints 3	Essendon Royals 1
(Mark Paleka, Ante Deak, Neven Antic)	(Michael Curcija)

Round 10 Fixtures

Fri, 23 Apr, 8:15PM

Oakleigh Cannons vs Fawkner Blues

Sun, 25 Apr, 3:00PM

Essendon Royals vs	Altona Magic
Preston Lions vs	Knox City
Bentleigh Greens vs	Whittlesea Stallions

Sun, 25 Apr, 6:00PM

Green Gully Cavaliers vs Frankston Pines

Mon, 26 Apr, 8:15PM



Michael Curcija was Essendon Royals' only goal-scorer in their three-one loss to the St Albans Saints

SOCCERWOMAN

BY JANENE MAR

CAMPAIGN STARTS HERE

The Young Matildas campaign kicks off in earnest this week at the Oceania U19 Women's Qualifying Tournament in Papua New Guinea, the winner of which qualifies for the 2nd FIFA U19 Women's World Championship to be staged in Thailand, 10-27 November 2004.

Oceania champion from 2002 (and from all women's senior qualification tournaments since 1994), Australia enters this tournament as the clear favourites. This is particularly so with traditional rivals New Zealand having decided not to contest these Qualifiers, preferring to build towards success in future years.

The Qualifiers in themselves should not present so great a challenge for the Aussies, but nevertheless, how they start to combine together on the park in this the team's first internationals, will set the tone for the real job at hand later on.

This 2004 team has a tough act to follow, with the Young Matildas of 2002 having set a lofty standard of an incredible 5th placing at the inaugural FIFA U19 Women's World Championship, going down to a golden goal against Brazil in the quarterfinals.

CHANGE TO YOUNG MATILDAS TEAM

The Young Matildas Team to contest this week's OFC (Oceania) U19 Women's Qualifying Tournament in Papua New Guinea has suffered a setback, with forward Amy Chapman a forced withdrawal through serious knee injury it was announced last Tuesday. Forward Katie Hilder has been selected as the replacement.

Chapman played her first season of WNSL (national league) last year with Canberra Eclipse with great success, after representing NSW Country for several years at national championships. Earlier this year, the 17-year-old relocated from her home in Albury to live in Canberra to

take up a scholarship at the ACT Academy of Sport in her pursuit of higher honours.

Hilder, age 19, who was a standby player for the side, now returns to the Young Matildas training camp in Canberra. The Sydneysider was a member of the WNSL championship-winning NSW Sapphires last year, her rookie season, and is a NSW Institute of Sport scholarship holder.

CAPTAINCY TRIO FOR YOUNG MATILDAS

Emma Davison is the new Young Matildas captain at the head of a three-member leadership team announced Friday by Women's National Coach Adrian Santrac, in what is a big year ahead for this U19 age group. Supporting as vice-captains are Leah Blayney and Sally

Davison, age 18, played every minute of Australia's four matches at the inaugural FIFA U19 World Championship held in 2002, where the Young Matildas finished in 5th place, exceeding all expectations. Playing at the heart of the defence, Davison played four seasons with the NSW Sapphires before recently relocating to Brisbane. The former Sydneysider first represented Australia in 2001 in the U19 Central Coast Series, and won the WNSL Championship with the Sapphires in 2003/04.

"It's an honour and a privilege to be leading this team, along with Leah and Sally, to the Oceania Qualifiers and then hopefully to the World Championship in Thailand", said Davison. "This is a great team and I think we'll do really well."

Midfielder Blayney, age 17, has already made her senior international debut, the youngest member of the Matildas side which contested the Australia Cup and Oceania Olympic Qualifiers in February/March this year. After narrowly missing selection for the 2002 U19 World Championship as a standby player, this was her first experience in the green and gold. Blayney was also a member of the NSW Sapphires team which won the 2003/04 WNSL grandfinal, her third season, and is from the Blue Mountains.

Shipard is one of the youngest members of the team at age 16, and hails from Wagga Wagga, recently taking the big step of moving to Sydney to further her soccer career.

After several years representing NSW Country at national championships, midfielder Shipard gained her first opportunity to play WNSL last season, helping NSW Sapphires to the Championship.

"Since we first got this group together, we've been observing the players' commitment and behaviour - their ability to interact, lead and direct, on and off the park," said Santrac.

"The way these three youngsters have

handled themselves generally - they have excelled. We needed to ensure we share the same belief and philosophy of what we want to achieve on the park, and our behaviour and image off the park. These three have shown they have the qualities we're looking for."

2004 OFC (OCEANIA) U19 WOMEN'S QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

Australia ~ Papua New Guinea ~ Solomon Islands

MATCH SCHEDULE

Lloyd Robson Oval, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Round 1 Tue 20 April 3.00pm
Papua New Guinea v Solomon Islands
AUSTRALIA - Bye

Round 2 Thu 22 April 3.00pm
AUSTRALIA v Solomon Islands
Papua New Guinea - Bye

Round 3 Sat 24 April 3.00pm
Papua New Guinea v AUSTRALIA
Solomon Islands - Bye
*The above times are PNG time, which is the same as AEST

AUSTRALIAN REFEREES TO QUALIFIERS

Also heading north to Port Moresby for the U19 Qualifiers are three Australian female match officials, about to embark on their first OFC-level tournament since recently achieving the coveted FIFA badge status.

Referee Jacqui Melksham of Queensland is the only female of three referees appointed for the event, whilst our selected Assistant Referees are Sarah Ho (NSW) and Michelle Treloar (ACT).

Another Australian, George Dick, will head the tournament officials as Match

YOUNG MATILDAS TEAM				
Players (18) :	Program	Hometown	Pos	DOB
Julia BAZI	NSWIS	Sydney	D	20/10/85
Ellen BEAUMONT	QAS	Brisbane	D	14/07/85
Leah BLAYNEY	AIS/NSWIS	Blue Mountains	M	28/10/86
Elissia CANHAM	QAS	Brisbane	D	29/04/85
Kim CARROL	QAS	Tully	D	02/09/87
Renee CARTWRIGHT	NSWIS	Crookwell	F	03/02/86
Lauren COLTHORPE	NSWIS (Northern)	Newcastle	M	25/10/85
Emma DAVISON	QAS	Sydney	D	04/05/85
Katie HILDER	NSWIS	Sydney	F	25/03/85
Leena KHAMIS	NSW	Sydney	F	19/06/86
Selin KURALAY	QAS	Melbourne	F	25/01/85
Kylie LEDBROOK	NSWIS	Sydney	M	20/03/86
Alison LOGUE	NSWIS (Northern)	Newcastle	GK	06/03/87
Claire O'SHEA	VIS	Bendigo	GK	02/12/85
Alannah REED	QAS	Innisfail	F	28/01/88
Sally SHIPARD	NSWIS	Wagga Wagga	M	20/10/87
Nicole SOMI	ACTAS	Canberra	D	19/01/87
Jenna TRISTRAM	NSWIS (Northern)	Coffs Harbour	F	28/10/86

Amy CHAPMAN (ACT) was selected for this team but withdrew due to injury, and was replaced by Katie Hilder.

Women's National Coach :

Adrian SANTRAC

Manager, National Women's Teams :

Jo SANDERS

Doctor :

James ILIC

Physiotherapist :

Kate BEERWORTH

Assistant Coach :

Alistair EDWARDS

Equipment Manager :

Berthy MAY

Shipard.

The trio of captains has the immediate challenge of leading the Young Matildas to next week's OFC (Oceania) U19 Women's Qualifying Tournament in Port Moresby, the winner of which advances to this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship.

The 3-member leadership team is the same concept which Santrac has utilised for the senior Matildas since January 2003.

from the dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis



About Roo Time

It's great to see Frank Farina and the board organizing friendly matches for both the Olyroo and Socceroo squads in the next few months.

Something that has lacked for quite some time now, the thrill and delight of seeing our Australian stars battle against quality opposition has really lifted the bar on our form as a national team.

The Olyroos will face Tunisia while the Roos will face Turkey in their next friendly matches.

ASA have really got themselves in order and its only showing more of an example of how badly run SA were in previous years.

Keep the friendly matches coming in ASA it will better the Australians position on the FIFA Rankings that's for sure.

The Next Big Thing?

Kaz Patafta

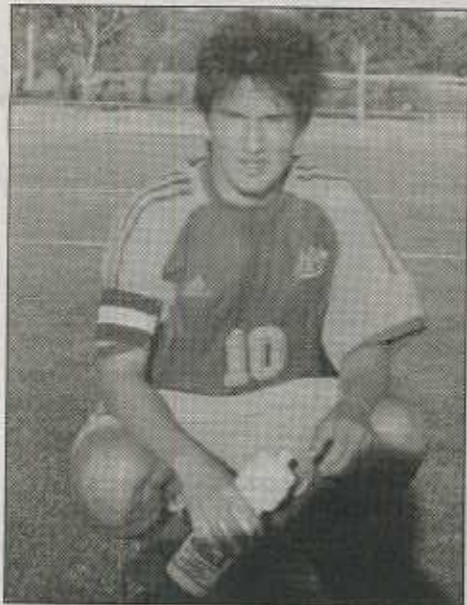
He may only be 15-years-old but already the young Canberra lad they call Kaz has the makings of becoming a star.

Currently playing and learning his trade at the famous Australian Institute of Sport under former Socceroo coach Steve O'Connor, Kaz has made headlines in his so far short football career.

At 15, the youngster was chosen in Ange Postecoglou's U17 Joeys camp in Canberra.

One moment that the potential star will not forget in a long time was when he put on the captain's armband in their friendly match against Japan during the Joeys training camp.

Not a bad achievement for one of the youngest members of the squad.



A new star in the Australian soccer scene – 15-year-old Kaz Patafta.

His feats do not stop there.

Two-weeks ago, the attacking midfielder was selected in Postecoglou's Young Socceroo squad currently on tour in France.

Three to four years difference, Kaz has been doing well under the circumstances of age.

Last year, ABSW embarked on a huge story when Patafta was selected to train with Spanish giants Real Madrid's youth squad on recommendation from SFX manager and ex-Socceroo Andy Bernal.

It was there Kaz realized the potential he had in becoming one of the next big stars to rise from the Australian scene.

Players such as Brett Holman, David Tarka, Ljubo Milicevic, Adrian Madeschi to name a few have been rising stars in the Australian game abroad.

Kaz could be on that next ship – remember you heard it first on ABSW.

ADELAIDE TO HOST OCEANIA CUP

South Australians will have a great dose of football when it was announced that next month's five-match Oceania Nations Cup series which involves the Socceroos will be held in Adelaide.

AFL and Rugby League commitments in both Sydney and Melbourne were the reasons why both main cities in Australia were unable to tab down this spectacular feast of football.

Adelaide's famous hi-tech Hindmarsh Stadium will host double headers every second night.

It is believed that the Socceroos will be fully equipped with overseas stars such as Marco Bresciano, Mark Viduka even Harry Kewell could make the trek down-under.

The Australia's opening match will be against fierce rivals New Zealand, then their likely other opponents could be Fiji, Tahiti, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

The tournament will play a part as both a qualifier for the lucrative Confederations Cup as well as the much anticipated 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

Format wise, the six nations will play each other once in a league format with the top two teams progressing towards a two-leg final.

Warm favourites to finish both first and second are the Socceroos and New Zealand.

The first final in October will decide Oceania's representative in next year's Confederations Cup while the second final will decide which country plays of against the sixth-placed South American country for a hopeful passage to Germany in 2006.

The series in Adelaide kicks off on May 29 and concludes June 6.



Current APL Bids

At this point in time, seven official bids from hopeful APL clubs have been evident in the media.

They are: Perth Glory, Adelaide United, NSW Soccer Federation, Victorian Soccer Federation, Melbourne Victory, Brisbane Lions, Football Kingz.

It is believed that at least 4 more offers will be placed on the table as consideration in the 8-team APL system next July/August.

SBS DOES IT AGAIN

Just how passionate is television station SBS about soccer?

Again, and for the hundredth time, soccer's only real news network claimed a huge scoop last week after announcing the full exclusive rights to broadcast the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany.

The Head of Television, Shaun Brown said: "This is a tremendous outcome for SBS television, for our viewers and for the sport of soccer in Australia. Our coverage, under the leadership of Mr Soccer, Les Murray will be complete and live with all 64 matches broadcast in full. There will also be extensive replays, highlights and support programs during the month-long event."

The finals will be held in Germany in June and July 2006. Mr Brown said the negotiations had taken a year to complete. He paid tribute to FIFA and its television marketing partner, Infront Sports & Media for the professional and understanding approach they had adopted throughout the discussions.

Oscar Frei, Chief Executive Officer of Infront, commented that there was strong competition amongst Australian broadcasters for the rights. "The historical commitment of SBS to football in Australia and the scale of its planned coverage played a significant role in our decision."

Les Murray, SBS Head of Sport said: "The Korea-Japan experience of 2002, and the way Australians warmed to it, both in great numbers and with great affection, demonstrates that the FIFA World Cup™ is now a very big part of the Australian sporting psyche."

"Viewers can rest assured that the event will receive the now traditional SBS level of dedication." In 2002 SBS was able to provide coverage of only 48 of the 64 matches yet attracted 10-million viewers to its coverage.

In addition to the 2006 FIFA World Cup, SBS has also secured rights to a number of other FIFA events including the FIFA World Youth Championship, the FIFA U-17 World Championship and the FIFA Confederations Cup, all to be staged in 2005.

ASA should look no further than SBS for the new APL rights.

Even though Channel 10 looks likely to take out the APL matches, SBS has shown time and time again that it's a sporting channel for the soccer fanatics.



AUSTRALIAN SOCCER ON THE PLAYSTATION

In what will be a first for Australian soccer, the latest version of This is Football 2004 will be somewhat of a collectors dream after news that all National League clubs will be present in the game.

All 13 clubs, now defunct, will be available for the game player to choose from along with an extensive database of real name players.

Below are screenshots of the Perth Glory and Sydney Olympic sides just as an example of what to expect in the game.



Amazing images of both the Perth Glory and Sydney Olympic squads in the new This is Football 2004 Playstation game out next month.

Its due for release in early May on both XBOX and the Playstation 2.

OVER-AGE HEADACHES FOR FARINA

Just who will be the three over-age players in Frank Farina's Olyroo squad come August for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens?

Farina stated last week that he will have a FULL quota of over-age players for his squad but stated that they will only be selected if they are able to make a full commitment to the team.

Being an U23 competition at the Olympics, rules are that each competing country can select up to 3 over-age players in which the former Strikers coach will use to the best of his and the country's ability.

Commitment to the Olympic cause though will be top priority for Farina.

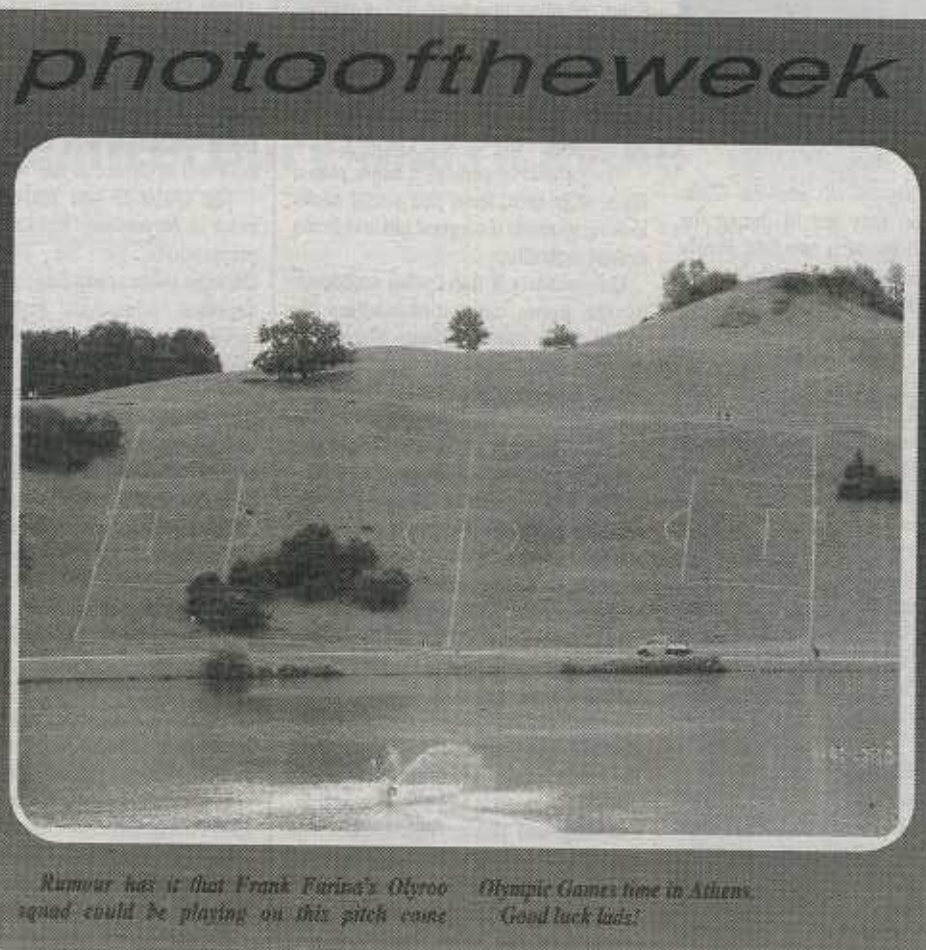
During the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the 3 older players (Stan Lazaridis, Josip Skoko and Mark Viduka) joined the side just three days before the first match.

"I've spoken to a number of the over-age players already and made it very clear that they have to be committed," he said.

"If they are serious and want to play in the Olympics, their commitment has to be exactly the same as the younger kids."

The Olyroos certainly need to strengthen their goal-keeper position and even though Brad Jones, Eugene Galekovic and Michael Turnbull are of right age, veteran keepers Mark Schwarzer, Zeljko Babic even Frank Juric could be a quality first choice keeper.

Other notable stars that could join the Olyroos could be Marco Bresciano, Harry Kewell, Tony Popovic, Hayden Foxe and Timmy Cahill to name a few.



Rumour has it that Frank Farina's Olyroo squad could be playing on this pitch come Olympic Games time in Athens. Good luck kids!

Green and Gold Army Series

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http://www.ggarmy.com

S O C C E R N O O S

The Green and Gold Army are pleased to announce that we have secured an exclusive block of seats for the upcoming internationals against Turkey in Sydney and Melbourne. To access seating in the Green and Gold Army section you must quote the code GGARMY from the relevant ticket agencies - this offer is now available on-line (Melbourne only - www.ticketmaster7.com.au) over the phone or across the counter.

Ticketing

Friday May 21 Aussie Stadium 7.30pm

Tickets on Sale Now

TICKETEK (02) 9266 4800

*Quote 'GGARMY' in Bay 1/2/3

Monday May 24 Telstra Dome 7.30pm

Tickets on Thursday April 8

TICKETMASTER7 Across the counter directly

<http://www.ticketmaster7.com.au>

www.ticketmaster7.com.au - PASS WORD GGARMY

*Quote 'GGARMY' -

Sydney \$67 (adult)

Sydney \$40 (concession)

Melbourne \$77 (adult)

Melbourne \$45 (concession)

*NB These are B Category seats (cheapest) behind the goals

Travel

The GGArmy are also hoping to organise bus trips from Adelaide to Melbourne, Melbourne to Sydney and Canberra to Sydney, if you are interested in any of these trips than please e-mail "mailto:turkey@ggarmy.com" turkey@ggarmy.com

Functions

We will also be organising pre and post match functions for both matches so stay tuned to GGArmy.com for details closer to the matches.

Merchandise

The GGArmy will have a range of merchandise (Hats, T-Shirts, Flags etc) available to be purchased at the pre-match functions and also at the game. Online shopping facilities will be available shortly, so stay tuned for the latest GGArmy merchandise.

As always seating in the GGArmy is not restricted to GGArmy Members but if you are purchasing seats with non-registered fans please direct them to ggarmy.com to register FREE.

The Green and Gold Army - Australia's national soccer teams supporters group for ALL Australians

Join free today at ggarmy.com

An old argument 'flares' up



Flares and all: Should they be banned all together in the Australian game?

Comment By Mark van Aken

Flares and football, in most European nations they go hand in hand. A smoky mist of color engulfing stadiums is par for the course from Frankfurt to Florence and is an intrinsic part of soccer culture. So with this in mind, why are they so frowned upon in the land down under?

Perhaps its simply because they are a part of soccer culture, a culture to which most Australians are oblivious. While flares have been a part of the NSL for as long as it has existed, you can count the number of times a flare has been ignited at an AFL match on one finger.

Of course the AFL plays its matches in top-notch stadiums, venues with high-level in house security and crowd controlling procedures. Its fair to say that if NSL clubs played out of such stadiums the flare 'issue' would be better policed, something which will most likely become a reality in the APL with Telstra Stadium and Dome, Aussie Stadium and Brisbane's show piece Suncorp all potential homes for the new competition.

The NSL have long had a strict policy

on flares - they are not allowed. Clubs are fined when they are lit during the game. The philosophy is two fold. Firstly the club is fined to encourage it to beef up security and secondly fans will avoid the flares as it hurts their club's hip pocket. Good in theory, less so in practice.

The argument against the humble flare is a sound one. They are potentially very dangerous. You wouldn't have to delve too far into most European clubs to find tales of lost eyesight from many fans. Add to this that the smoke can be over whelming particularly for the very young, the elderly or of course sufferers of asthma and a host of other medical problems. Not that these problems are common or in most cases likely, but in this day and age of Ambulance Chasing Lawyers, it is one head ache the game's administrators can do with out.

Flares are relatively small, slim objects and are thus near on impossible to keep out of match day venues. Due to their banned status in Australia, fans on the terraces will simply light them and drop them where they stand. This almost negates the purpose of the flare in the first place. On the terraces in Greece you can see the fans

standing proudly with their flares spewing out smoke, filling the surrounding air with an atmosphere inducing haze. What you don't see is someone lighting up, dropping and running.

In our little version of the world game a flare usually only lasts 20 or 30 seconds before being suffocated by security in a sand bucket. It makes you question whether all the time and effort put in was even worth it. There is a cost factor with flares, retailing at around \$25 a pop - although it has been raised with this writer that not all flares that make their way inside NSL or local state venues are necessarily obtained across the counter/if you get my drift.

That alludes to perhaps a major reason flares exist here; teens and young adults looking to rebel. Its a good old revolution against authority.

One wonders if flares were sanctioned by the games authorities whether we would see so many at games. Many offer the European argument, the one that speaks of atmosphere and culture; it is a good argument, one subscribed to by South Melbourne Chief Mark Patterson earlier this year when defending his club.

The reality is usually something different. The reality is a youngster trying to play his part in sticking it up the powers that be. The solution? It lies in the origin of the 'problem' in Europe. Holland, like many other countries, allow flares in a controlled environment pre-game.

Fans co-ordinate with security before the match and flares are lit en masse; people stand with them side by side in unison. The result is an amazing spectacle for all to enjoy, rather than half a minute of fruitless song and dance. That creates real atmosphere on the terraces which is all any of us should want.

Don't ban the fans flares, harness them. Control them and benefit from them.

Olyroos to play Tunisia

The Australian Soccer Association (ASA) last week announced that it has confirmed an international match for the Australia Under-23s (Olympic team) against Tunisia to be played in the Tunisian city of Monastir on Wednesday 28 April 2004.

The game continues the national Under-23 team's build-up towards this year's football tournament at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and follows the team's qualification in January.

The Australia Under-23 team won the Oceania qualifying tournament after defeating New Zealand 3-1 on aggregate in the tournament final and most recently drew 0-0 in Greece in late March.

The Under-23 side played in Tunisia twice in November 1999 as part of their preparations for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games recording a 1-0 win and a 1-1 draw.

The Socceroos have also previously played in Tunisia winning 3-0 in October 1997.

The match will be played as an afternoon kick-off at the 20,000 capacity Ben Jannet Stadium in Monastir with the Tunisian senior team playing later than evening against Mali in Sfax.

The stadium was built for the recently completed 2004 African Nation Cup of Nations, which was won by the host nation when they defeated Morocco 2-1 in the final.

Following the match a 20-man two-week camp will be convened at the Australian Institute of Sport for Australian-based players only.

The men's football tournament at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games will be held between 11 August and 28 August 2004, with the group draw for the tournament due to be staged on 9 June 2004.

It's been a great preparation for Farina's

squad who are certainly going on the right pathway of playing quality opposition just in time for the Olympic Games held in Athens in August.

Look to see stars such as Alex Brosque, Shane Cansdell Sherriff, Nick Carle, Spase Dilevski, Ahmad Elrich, Brett Holman, Dylan Macallister, Ljubo Milicevic, Jade North, David Tarka, Carl Valeri, Luke Wilshire as probable players for the final Olympic Games squad.

It will also be interesting to see whether Farina will use the 3 over-age option with players such as Mark Schwarzer, Tim Cahill, Mark Viduka, Scott Chipperfield and Marco Bresciano rumoured to be one of the three in Athens.



Could we see Marco Bresciano in Athens for the Olyroos?



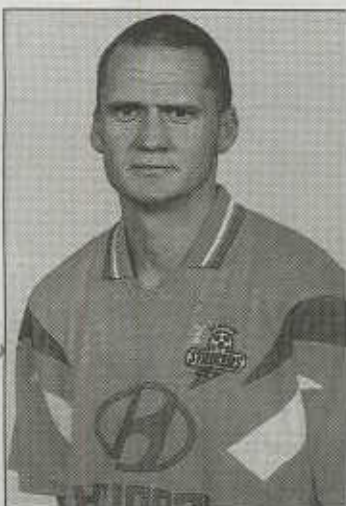
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QLD Premier League - Round 7



Nick Meredith: The hard-hitting star turned hero to villain after getting sent-off but scored both of Brisbane City's goals against Palm Beach last week.

By Glenn Davis

Former national league stalwart Nick Meredith went from hero to villain as Brisbane City returned to winning form with a comprehensive 2-nil win against a youthful Palm Beach in their Brisbane premier league clash on Saturday night.

Meredith, a former Brisbane Strikers midfielder, scored both goals for the visitors in each half before he was one of three players - two from City and one from Palm Beach - sent off late in the game in separate incidents.

Meredith slotted home a 25 metre shot midway through the opening period to give City a 1-nil lead then neatly beat an

offside trap to slot home with only the keeper to beat in the second half.

Brisbane City coach Frank Pimblett was delighted to pick up three points away from home but was disappointed with Meredith's send off.

Meredith, 35, was given his marching orders after two yellow cards in the space of five minutes from the 85th minute.

"Nick was superb but he's got to learn not to react to certain situations," Pimblett said.

"Otherwise he'll be spending a lot more time on the bench next time.

"It was a fantastic win but it leaves a bad taste in your mouth as we'll miss him and Danny Pittain next week."

Pittain, a recent signing from Inala, came on as a substitute with 15 minutes to go but lasted only ten minutes before he was shown the red card when he re-acted to a bad tackle.

Palm Beach's Gavin Peddle was dismissed on 82 minutes for his second yellow card after backchat to the referee.

Pimblett rated the victory on par with his side's opening round win against Easts at Heath Park.

"Palm Beach are a very good young side and are always hard to beat on their home turf," he said.

"It was a very big win as Palm Beach were third and only one point ahead of us before the game.

"We're still in the thick of things now."

Palm Beach coach Karl Herdle said the physical City outfit intimidated his side.

"They muscled us out of the game, they were too experienced and too strong and they really intimidated the boys," he said.

"We played badly, that was our worst

game of the year."

Mitchelton stretched its unbeaten run to seven games with a hard fought 3-nil win in driving rain over Taringa at Teralaba Park.

Taringa, buoyed by their shock 6-nil win the previous round, held Mitchelton scoreless at half time until defender Daniel Timms broke the deadlock with a 65th minute header from a corner.

Mitchelton then increased its lead five minutes later after Richard Iwac took on the defence down the right flank before cutting inside to lay off for Steve Comino to tap home.

Ettienne Mermer put the match out of Taringa's reach in the 80th minute, drilling home a shot into the top corner after a great Mitchelton build-up.

Coach Greg Brown believes his side deserved the points although he was full of praise for Taringa's young guns.

"We got better as the game wore on," Brown said.

"We've got a lot of self belief even though things didn't go to plan in the first half.

"The first half was very even and Taringa are a lot better than people think and will win their fair share of games.

"They're very young but are very sharp."

The win kept Mitchelton in second place on the premierships table, five points adrift of league leaders Queensland Lions who downed Easts 5-nil at Lions Stadium.

Lions continue to prove they are the strongest Queensland club and worthy of a spot in the new national league after netting all five goals in the second half.

Lions broke a scoreless first half deadlock in the 65th minute from John Richter

before Michael Baird came off the bench to score in the 70th minute for a 2-nil buffer.

Former Ipswich Knights player Stu Drinkeld made it three after 75 minutes before Baird picked up his double in the 82nd minute.

Drinkeld chimed in two minutes from time for his second to secure a worthy win for the home side.

Pine Rivers also had to rely on their substitutes for the fifth game in a row to earn a point in a thrilling, but controversial 3-all draw at home against Wynnum Wolves.

Pine Rivers led 2-1 at half time after a double from midfielder Aaron Thiesfield who slotted both goals from the edge of the area in reply to Anthony Paolino who opened the scoring for Wolves on 15 minutes.

However, the Wolves hit back to level the scores 2-all after referee John Peacock awarded a penalty when defender Damian Harris copped an unlucky bounce, which struck his hand.

The penalty was well converted by Rockhampton striker Michael Van Moolenbroek who later put his team ahead 3-2 with ten minutes remaining.

Pine Rivers finished strongly to level the match 3-all when substitute Darren Bender squared the ball inside to set up fellow bench player Seb Thatchell who side footed home.

The controversial ending came in the final minutes when Pine Rivers' Luke Noble pounced and slotted home after what appeared a dropped ball from the Wynnum keeper.

However, Peacock disallowed the

match winner ruling Noble had kicked the ball from the keepers' grasp.

"We were running all over them in the end and Luke's goal should have been allowed or we should have got a penalty," said player-coach Clayton Koch.

"Luke was being held back by one of their players at the time and their keeper dropped the ball.

"It was a disappointing end as we felt we had it won. With two minutes to go it would have been all over."

The draw kept Pine Rivers equal on 11 points with Palm Beach and Rochedale who won their local derby 2-nil against Souths.

Rochedale were in complete control against the visitors in the local derby and went to the half time interval with a goal advantage after Greg Thomas capitalised on a Souths defensive mistake to slot home after 20 minutes.

Rochedale, which beat Souths 4-2 away and lost 3-1 at home in last year's corresponding derby matches, increased its lead after the break when Nick Maas finished off a Grant Marshall movement in the 70th minute.

Rochedale missed a chance for a 3-nil lead late in the game when Alex Panic missed a penalty.

Coach Kieran Cooper was delighted to win the Derby clash.

"We haven't reached our full potential yet but we're playing well and we've met all the teams above us," Cooper said.

"Next week will be a test when we play Brisbane City."

In the final match of the round Toowoomba downed North Star 2-1.

Despotovski reconsiders retirement



Bobby Despotovski could return to the APL next season.

Perth Glory pair Anthony Danze and Bobby Despotovski have signed for local outfit Inglewood United.

Despotovski's decision could lead to him

postponing talk of retirement and staying with the Glory next season.

He will meet with Glory chairman Nick Tana over the next few weeks to discuss his future.

The Glory board have stated their intent in gaining Bobby for another year.

"This is good for me, for the club and for our players," Inglewood coach Eddie Hodgkinson told the West Australian.

"Bobby is the highest-profile player in WA and at training was an absolute pleasure. He is a terrific bloke and a terrific player.

"As for Anthony, he looked great. Having these players can only lift the profile of the club. It is very exciting."

Despotovski said, "I am looking forward to it.

"It has been almost 10 years since I played in the Premier League and I am looking forward to seeing the standard."

MILICIC KNOCKS IN BRACE

New Pahang signing Ante Milicic struck a double on debut in Saturday's 2-2 draw with Perlis in the Malaysian Super League.

The ex-Parramatta Power striker struck either side of half-time to have the visitors 2-0 up, before Perlis' Sierra Leone star Lamin Conteh Jr hit a late double to rescue a point.

Before the match, Pahang coach Zainal Abidin Hassan warned Milicic that he was no guaranteed starter, despite his big reputation.

"The idea of hiring Milicic is to give us more choice of foreigners to team up with the

locals," Zainal said. Milicic is also facing stiff competition from the club's youngsters, but said: "I am not worried about my age. I am still fit and I can perform, perhaps better than the younger ones."

Meanwhile, Wollongong Wolves youth youngsters Matthew Gordon and Tommy Arcaba have gained trials with French Ligue 1 club Metz.

Currently in France for the St Joesph Tournament, the Wolves pair could pick up a much needed overseas deal.

Maradona suffers heart attack



Praying for a quick return: Maradona is in INTENSIVE care after suffering a heart attack.

Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona suffered a heart attack and is now in intensive care and linked to a respirator, a Buenos Aires clinic said.

Maradona: family 'at his bedside'

Maradona's doctor, Rafael Cahe, said doctors would not be able to give an assessment of the 43-year-old star's recovery prospects for one or two days.

Sources said earlier that Maradona, 43, had been admitted to a private Buenos Aires clinic because of a drug overdose.

The TN report quoted members of Maradona's "intimate circle" as saying the former star footballer was in "critical condition" following an overdose and that there were fears for his heart.

Maradona has a history of drug abuse and has been battling addiction for years. He was once suspended from playing football after testing positive for cocaine.

Maradona's father, Diego, his ex-wife, Claudia Villafane, and their two children, Dalma and Gianina, were reported to be at the hospital.

This has heightened speculation about the condition of the former skipper of Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning team.

Maradona arrived at the Swiss-Argentine run clinic with Rafael Cahe, a physician known for having previously treated former Argentine president Carlos Menem.

"He wanted to have a few health check-ups," one of the former footballer's close relatives told reporters as rumours started that Maradona was in an intensive-care unit.

Maradona's recent return to Argentina from Cuba on March 22 had prompted concern and speculation about his health because of the excess weight he has put on.

Maradona had earlier watched his former club Boca Juniors play league rivals Nuevo Chicago but left during the second half and was later admitted to the clinic.

Since January 2000, Maradona has spent a lot of time in Cuba where he has already made attempts to kick his alleged drug habit.

Maradona played 91 matches for Argentina and scored 34 goals, including his infamous "hand of God" goal against England when he fisted the ball into the net. His career began in 1977 and ended in 1994.

He has played for a host of famous clubs including Boca Juniors, Newells Old Boys and Napoli in Italy's Serie A. Maradona also played for Barcelona and Sevilla in Spain.

ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

It does appear that two teams from Sicily will play in Italy's Serie A next year - Palermo and Messina. It would be an incredible achievement for the region given that their last representative in Italy's highest league was Catania in 1983/84.

Palermo is leading the Serie B and Messina is not too far off the pace as well. Next season five teams will be promoted to the Serie A while only three will be relegated to the Serie B as the Italian Federation expands the Serie A to 20 teams instead of the current 18.

The reason for this was the legal challenge that Catania threatened the Federation with at the start of the season after controversially being dumped from the Serie B. To please everyone they agreed to have a 24 team Serie B instead of the usual 20.

An expanded Serie A, coming hot off Euro 2004, is certainly not required and the players will have a very short off-season. It is simply wrong to expand the season and place extra demands on players given that they already participate in so many games.

Besides Palermo and Messina, there are another ten teams that could still realistically fight it out for one of the five promotion positions from the Serie B.

Atalanta, Livorno, Piacenza, Cagliari, Fiorentina, Triestina, Ternana, Catania, Vicenza and Torino are all still in contention for Serie A promotion.

It had to happen but it took 29 rounds before Ancona won a Serie A game and it came recently against Bologna with a 3-2 home victory. The out of sorts Bologna lost to the already relegated bound Ancona before a half full stadium in the Adriatic sea city.

Ancona have been the whipping boys of the Serie A and realistically have been well and truly out of their depth in Italy's premier competition.

Despite replacing their coach throughout the season with veteran mentor Giovanni Galeone and buying some new players, including former Italy international Dino Baggio from Blackburn Rovers, Ancona have not really been capable of matching teams this year.

However, despite all the doom and gloom and guaranteed return ticket to the Serie B, Ancona can say that at least they didn't go through an entire season without winning a game.

Virtually no matter what happens at Euro 2004 Italy will replace their coach Giovanni Trapattoni but he certainly will not go without a fight.

The veteran Trapattoni has made it clear that he wants to hold onto the position and that he is not interested in another position such as Technical Director.

He was extremely lucky not to be replaced after the last World Cup but with some positive recent results he managed to stay in the position. The call for Marcello Lippi, the current coach of Juventus, to take over will only get louder especially if the Azzurri don't win the tournament in Portugal. Anything less will be unacceptable given that Italy were narrowly beaten in the final four years ago against France in Rotterdam.

Lippi would be a natural replacement. He has nothing to prove at club level anymore having won everything in his two stints at Juventus. Furthermore, it is an open secret that Lippi is interested in the job but he may get tired of waiting around.

Trapattoni should know what it feels like to wait around for the national coaching position given that he was appointed in 2000, many years after a lot of people felt that he had missed the boat.

When the great Enzo Bearzot was replaced after Mexico 1986 as Italy's coach, Trapattoni should have immediately been appointed. He had just finished an unbelievable 11-year stint at Juventus whereby the 'Old Lady' was undoubtedly the greatest club side in the world having won everything there was to be won.

Trapattoni was then considered by all to be the master coach but the Italian Federation chose to ignore him and appoint the relatively unknown Azeglio Vicini. Trapattoni moved to Inter in 1986 where he had more success including the 1989 Scudetto.

Vicini, Arrigo Sacchi, Cesare Maldini and Dino Zoff (Trapattoni's former star goalkeeper at Juventus) were all appointed as Italy coach before he finally got his chance some 14 years overdue. It was almost too late but he well and truly deserved such a reward for a great playing and coaching career.

However, now is the time for another change and Lippi should not be overlooked because Trapattoni has had his time. It would be another travesty of justice if the right person had to wait another 14 years before being recognised as the right person for the job.

NSW readers can tune into 98.5 FM on Sunday nights at 10.00pm for all the latest soccer news locally and abroad with myself, Joseph Carlucci, Mark Stavroulakis, Robert Scarselletta and Stuart Jones.

SIENA 1 AC MILAN 2

AC Milan maintained their comfortable lead at the top of Serie A with a narrow 2-1 victory over Siena.

The game had been heading for a draw after Enrico Chiesa had cancelled out Andriy Shevchenko's opener but Brazilian play-maker Kaka struck late on to earn the Rossoneri maximum points.

Milan edged into the lead when Shevchenko pounced on a fumbled ball by Siena goalkeeper Marco Fortin. Siena were back on level terms after Pierluigi Collina awarded the hosts a penalty, which Chiesa stepped up and confidently fired past Dida.

In the 79th minute Siena were reduced to 10 men when Simone Vergassola collected his second yellow for a foul on Kaka. This handed Milan the boost they needed and it was Kaka who found the net soon after when he headed in the winner from close range.

INTER MILAN 4 BOLOGNA 2

An important victory for Inter in their bid to make the fourth Champions League qualification slot. Uruguayan Alvaro Recoba put them on their way, side-footing home an Adriano cross in the 33rd minute.

Eight minutes after the break Fabio Cannavaro headed in a corner at the near post and a minute later Serbian Dejan Stankovic made it 3-0, finishing off a swift break involving Adriano and Obafemi Martins.

Claudio Bellucci pulled one back for Bologna before Martins produced some smart footwork and a sharp finish to make it 4-1. Bellucci added a second for Bologna 14 minutes from the end.

LAZIO 4 ANCONA 2

Lazio came from behind to deny relegated Ancona a second win.

Cristian Bucchi fired the relegated side ahead in the 11th minute. A Fernando Couto header brought Lazio level before Simone Inzaghi missed a chance to put the Rome side ahead from the penalty spot in the 35th minute.

Swedish midfielder Daniel Andersson restored Ancona's lead in the 64th minute with a beautiful shot from the edge of the area and a shock looked on the cards.

SERIE B

Torino 1 Vicenza 1, Ascoli 0 Piacenza 0, Atalanta 3 Catania 0, Avellino 0 Fiorentina 1, Livorno 3 Verona 0, Messina 2 Venezia 1, Palermo 2 Treviso 3, Pescara 2 Bari 0, Salernitana 1 Como 0, Ternana 0 Napoli 0, Triestina 2 Genoa 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1.Palermo	38	17	14	7	58	33	65
2.Messina	38	17	14	7	54	35	65
3.Atalanta	38	16	17	5	49	30	65
4.Livorno	38	16	16	6	59	37	64
5.Piacenza	38	15	16	7	36	27	61
6.Cagliari	37	15	14	8	59	39	59
7.Fiorentina	38	15	14	9	44	41	59
8.Triestina	38	14	16	8	46	41	58
9.Ternana	38	14	13	11	49	41	55
10.Catania	38	14	11	13	42	43	53
11.Vicenza	38	12	16	10	39	36	52
12.Torino	38	12	15	11	46	40	51
13.Napoli	38	9	21	8	27	34	48
14.Treviso	38	10	16	12	36	38	46
15.Genoa	38	11	13	14	39	44	46
16.Ascoli	38	10	14	14	39	44	44
17.Albinoleffe	37	11	11	15	32	43	44
18.Salernitana	38	11	11	16	29	41	44
19.Venezia	38	9	14	15	30	42	41
20.Pescara	38	10	11	17	32	50	41
21.Verona	38	9	13	16	40	56	40
22.Bari	38	9	10	19	39	52	37
23.Como	38	7	11	20	30	52	32
24.Avellino	38	5	13	20	39	54	28

But Lazio responded with Stefano Fiore following in after a rocket shot from Demetrio Albertini was parried and Couto added his second from close range before a late goal from Luciano Zauri.

MODENA 0 AS ROMA 1

A cracking free-kick from Francesco Totti 10 minutes after the interval secured the three points for Roma to keep them in with a chance of catching leaders Milan.

Despite missing midfielders Olivier Dacourt and Emerson, Fabio Capello's side dominated, although Modena went close to an equaliser with a 30-metre drive from Diomansy Kamara.

PARMA 2 JUVENTUS 2

Parma took the lead in an exciting game at the Tardini stadium with Benito Carbone converting after Gianluigi Buffon had parried a Mark Bresciano shot in the 35th minute.

Juve's former Parma striker Marco Di Vaio blasted home a left foot strike to bring Juve level in the 78th minute but Parma responded swiftly with the lively Gilardino slotting past Gianluigi Buffon to restore the home side's lead.

Three minutes into injury time Croatian Igor Tudor pounced to equalise after Fabrizio Miccoli's shot bounced off the bar.

SAMPDORIA 3 PERUGIA 2

Sampdoria maintained their push for a UEFA Cup spot while Perugia drifted towards Serie B despite a brave comeback.

Aimo Diana put Samp ahead before the impressive Francesco Flachi was left unmarked to make it 2-0 on the stroke of half-time.

But a superbly struck free-kick from Brazilian Ze Maria and an opportunist strike from Fabrizio Ravanelli brought Perugia level five minutes from the end only for Flachi to claim the winner with a brilliant free kick.

CHIEVO 0 REGGINA 0

A low-key game with both sides looking too afraid of losing to go after the points with any real intent.

Chievo's Giuseppe Sculli had the best chance in the second half when he forced an excellent save from Reggina keeper Emanuele Belardi.

EMPOLI 1 BRESCIA 1

Brescia will be happier with the point despite taking a 37th minute lead when Roberto Baggio's penalty was saved but Empoli defender Fabrizio Ficini, sliding in on the loose ball ahead of Baggio, turned the ball into his own net.

Empoli then also missed a penalty when Ighli Vannuchi's spot kick was saved by Brescia keeper Luca Castellazzi but 12 minutes from time Mirco Gasparetto equalised from close range.



AC Milan's Kaka celebrates after scoring the winning goal against Siena.

LECCE 2 UDINESE 1

In a bad tempered match, Lecce ran out close-fought 2-1 winners against 10-man Udinese to put a dent in the Bianconeri's UEFA Cup hopes. Udinese broke the deadlock in the 22nd minute through Martin Jorgensen's decisive far-post finish but Marco Cassetti levelled on the stroke of half-time.

Udinese's night then took a turn for the worst when Giampiero Pinzi was red carded three minutes into first-half stoppage time and Uruguayan Ernesto Chevanton compounded their misery by grabbing a winner for Lecce.

FIXTURES

Sunday 25th April

Ancona	vs	Chievo Verona
Roma	vs	Empoli
Bologna	vs	Siena
Brescia	vs	Perugia
Internazionale	vs	Lazio
Juventus	vs	Lecce
Modena	vs	Sampdoria
Reggina	vs	Parma
Udinese	vs	Milan

SERIE A

Lecce 2 Udinese 1, Siena 1 AC Milan 2, Chievo 0 Reggina 0, Empoli 1 Brescia 1, Inter Milan 4 Bologna 2, Lazio 4 Ancona 2, Modena 0 Roma 1, Parma 2 Juventus 2, Sampdoria 3 Perugia 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Milan	30	23	6	1	59	20	75
2Roma	29	20	6	3	63	14	66
3Juventus	30	19	6	5	59	36	63
4Inter Milan	30	15	7	8	54	33	52
5Parma	30	14	9	7	49	40	51
6Lazio	29	15	5	9	47	33	50
7Sampdoria	30	11	12	7	39	36	45
8Udinese	30	12	9	9	37	34	45
9Bologna	30	9	8	13	40	47	35
10Chievo	30	8	10	12	29	35	34
11Brescia	30	7	12	11	46	51	33
12Siena	30	7	10	13	36	46	31
13Lecce	30	8	7	15	34	50	31
14Reggina	30	5	14	11	24	40	29
15Modena	30	5	12	13	24	39	27
16Empoli	30	6	9	15	21	46	27
17Perugia	30	3	13	14	38	54	22
18Ancona	30	1	7	22	18	63	10
18Ancona	29	1	7	21	16	59	10



Inter Milan's Adriano (left) challenges for the ball with Bologna's Emiliano Moretti.



ENGLISH

ARSENAL 5
LEEDS UTD 2

Thierry Henry scored four times as leaders Arsenal walloped struggling Leeds United at Highbury.

Robert Pires opened the scoring in the sixth minute after a slick move and Henry followed up with three superb finishes and a delightfully taken penalty between the 27th and 67th minutes.

His fourth goal was his 150th for the club since he joined in 1999.

CHELSEA 0
EVERTON 0

Chelsea dominated the first half and strikers Adrian Mutu and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink wasted a string of chances before midfielder Frank Lampard hit the bar after a fine spin and shot.

Everton striker Wayne Rooney had a shot saved by Marco Ambrosio's legs.

Second-placed Chelsea continued to waste chances in the second half and their premier league title hopes are now all but extinguished.

PORTSMOUTH 1
MANCHESTER UTD 0

Portsmouth sealed their first win over the champions in 47 years and Steve Stone's 36th-minute winner lifted Harry Redknapp's side away from the relegation zone although it came against the run of play.

Lomana Lua Lua fired in a cross from the right, United defenders Wes Brown and Gary Neville failed to cut it out and midfielder Stone gleefully rammed the ball home from a tight angle.

Neville felt he should have had a penalty late on when his shot hit a defender's hands.

WOLVERHAMPTON 2
MIDDLESBROUGH 0

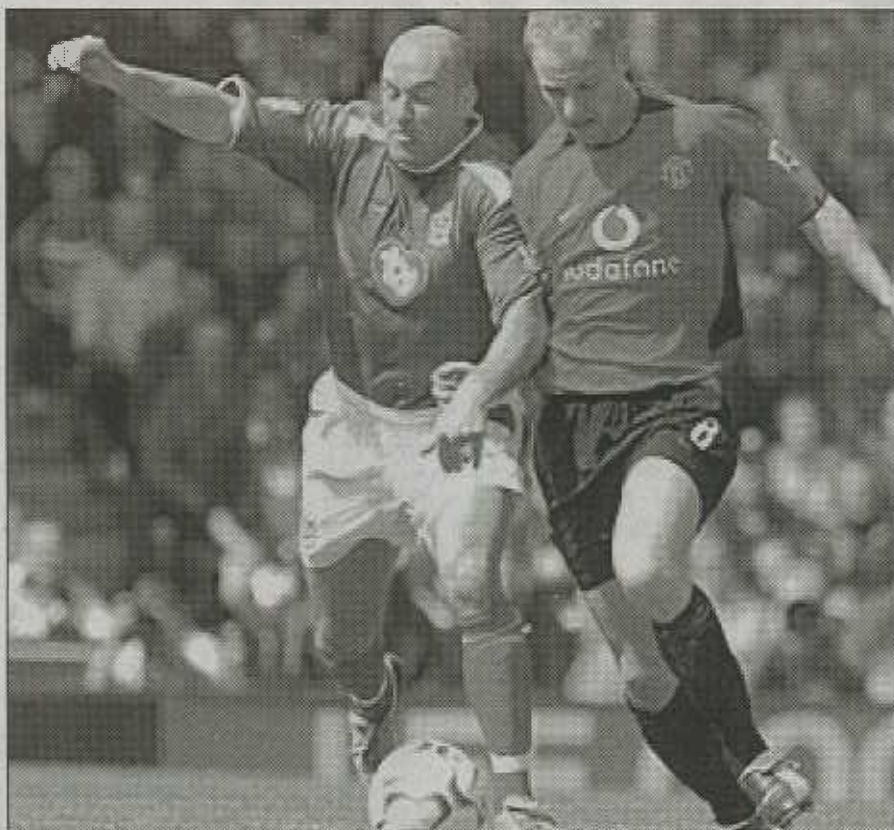
Wolves took the lead through a Carl Cort header in the 28th minute against the run of play, from a cross by defender Mark Clyde from the right.

Henri Camara added a fine second goal for the bottom side in the 62nd minute after a flick-on by Cort and then missed a late penalty.

BLACKBURN 1
LEICESTER CITY 0

Blackburn had not won in their last nine home games and the match between two relegation candidates was tense throughout.

Striker Andy Cole set up Blackburn's winner with a cross from the goalline which Greek defender Nikos Dabizas swept into his own net just before



Portsmouth goal scorer Steve Stone (left) tussles with Manchester United's Nicky Butt.

half-time.

BOLTON 2
TOTTENHAM 0

The home side took the lead with a long range shot by Spanish defender Ivan Campo in the seventh minute.

American goalkeeper Kasey Keller kept Spurs in the game until Denmark's Henrik Pedersen toe-poked Bolton's second in the 65th minute.

It was Tottenham's 18th defeat of the season and leaves them edging towards the relegation zone.

CHARLTON 1
BIRMINGHAM CITY 1

A game between two sides who have performed above expectations this season came alive in the final 10 minutes when City went ahead through striker Clinton Morrison before midfielder Matt Holland equalised for the home side.

Both teams have an outside chance of Champions League soccer next season.

LIVERPOOL 0
FULHAM 0

Fourth-placed Liverpool dominated the early stages but were lucky to get to half-time at 0-0 after Fulham hit the crossbar with Jerzy Dudek beaten and Collins John hit the goalkeeper's legs when unmarked six metres out.

Midfielder Steven Gerrard missed a penalty in the second half when his shot was saved by Edwin van der Sar and England striker Emile Heskey hit the post, while Bobby Petta missed an open goal for Fulham.

The draw has cast serious doubts over Liverpool's chances of making that elusive final Champions League spot.

Houllier's tenure as coach of the Reds seems well and truly over.

MANCHESTER CITY 1
SOUTHAMPTON 3

James Beattie put the visitors ahead with a near post header from a Marian Pahars cross in the first half and set up the second for strike partner Kevin Phillips with a flick-on in the second half.

Phillips scored a second with nine minutes to go after French striker Nicolas Anelka scored a consolation goal for City who are now in serious relegation trouble.

ASTON VILLA 0
NEWCASTLE 0

Newcastle defender Andy O'Brien was sent off after 10 minutes for a professional foul on striker Darius Vassell but Villa failed to capitalise on their extra man and created the fewer chances in a match with hardly a shot on target.



Liverpool's Harry Kewell (right) is chased by Fulham's Moritz Volz.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal 5 Leeds Utd 0, Portsmouth 1 Manchester Utd 0, Blackburn 1 Leicester 0, Bolton 2 Tottenham 0, Charlton 1 Birmingham 1, Chelsea 0 Everton 0, Liverpool 0 Fulham 0, Manchester City 1 Southampton 3, Wolverhampton 2 Middlesbrough 0, Aston Villa 0 Newcastle 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	33	24	9	0	67	22	81
Chelsea	34	22	6	6	60	27	72
Man Utd	33	21	5	7	59	32	68
Liverpool	34	13	11	10	48	36	50
Newcastle	33	12	14	7	45	33	50
Aston Villa	34	13	10	11	44	40	49
Charlton	33	13	9	11	44	41	48
Birmingham	34	12	11	11	40	42	47
Southampton	33	12	9	12	38	33	45
Fulham	34	12	9	13	47	44	45
Middlesbrough	34	12	9	13	40	42	45
Bolton	34	11	11	12	40	51	44
Everton	34	9	12	13	42	51	39
Tottenham	34	11	5	18	42	54	38
Blackburn	34	10	7	17	48	57	37
Portsmouth	33	10	7	16	37	47	37
Man City	34	7	13	14	47	50	34
Leeds	34	8	8	18	35	69	32
Leicester	34	5	13	16	41	59	28
Wolverhampton	34	6	10	18	33	71	28

FIRST DIVISION

Bradford 2 Wimbledon 3, Cardiff 2 Burnley 0, Crystal Palace 1 Wigan 1, Derby 5 Preston 1, Gillingham 1 Ipswich 2, Norwich 5 Walsall 0, Notts Forest 2 Millwall 2, Reading 1 Crewe 1, Rotherham 1 Watford 1, Sheffield Utd 0 Stoke 1, West Ham 2 Coventry 0, Sunderland 0 West Bromwich 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norwich	42	25	10	7	71	34	85
West Brom	42	24	11	7	61	35	83
Sunderland	41	20	11	10	58	40	71
Ipswich	43	21	8	14	81	68	71
Wigan	43	18	15	10	59	43	69
West Ham	43	17	16	10	60	44	67
Millwall	42	17	15	10	53	43	66
Sheffield Utd	43	19	9	15	60	52	66
Crystal Palace	42	18	10	14	64	57	64
Reading	43	18	10	15	53	56	64
Cardiff	43	17	11	15	64	54	62
Stoke	42	16	11	15	52	52	59
Coventry	43	15	13	15	59	50	58
Preston	43	15	12	16	62	63	57
Crewe	43	14	10	19	53	59	52
Notts Forest	43	12	15	16	56	57	51
Watford	42	13	12	17	50	61	51
Rotherham	43	12	14	17	47	57	50
Derby	43	12	13	18	51	65	49
Walsall	43	12	12	19	42	61	48
Burnley	42	11	14	17	56	72	47
Gillingham	43	13	8	22	44	61	47
Bradford	43	10	6	27	38	64	36
Wimbledon	42	7	4	31	38	84	25
Wimbledon	40	6	4	30	34	80	22

SECOND DIVISION

Blackpool 3 Brighton 1, Chesterfield 0 Stockport 3, Colchester 4 Notts County 1, Hartlepool 2 Bournemouth 1, Oldham 1 Peterborough 1, Plymouth 2 Wycombe 1, Port Vale 1 Wrexham 0, QPR 3 Grimsby 0, Rushden & Diamonds 2 Barnsley 3, Sheffield Wed 1 Brentford 1, Swindon 1 Bristol City 1, Tranmere 1 Luton 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	43	23	12	8	78	40	81
QPR	43	20	17	6	76	42	77
Bristol City	43	21	12	10	55	36	75
Swindon	43	20	12	11	74	54	72
Brighton	43	20	10	13	61	43	70
Hartlepool	43	19	12	12	72	57	69
Port Vale	43	18	10	15	67	61	64
Luton	42	16	14	12	64	60	62
Bournemouth	42	16	13	13	54	49	61
Tranmere	43	15	16	12	54	53	61
Blackpool	43	16	11	16	56	58	59
Barnsley	43	14	17	12	51	53	59
Colchester	43	15	13	15	49	54	58
Wrexham	42	16	7	19	46	55	55
Sheffield Wed	43	13	14	16	45	57	53
Oldham	42	10	19	13	60	57	49
Brentford	43	13	10	20	50	67	49
Peterborough	43	11	15	17	53	55	48
Rushden & Diamonds	43	13	9	21	60	68	48
Stockport	43	10	18	15	58	66	48
Grimsby	43	12	11	20	52	77	47
Chesterfield	43	10	15	18	47	69	45
Notts County	43	10	11	22	48	74	41
Wycombe	43	6	16	21	47	72	34

FIXTURES

Saturday 24th April

Everton	v	Blackburn Rovers
Manchester United	v	Liverpool
Fulham	v	Charlton Athletic
Leicester City	v	Manchester City
Middlesbrough	v	Aston Villa
Southampton	v	Bolton Wanderers

Sunday 25th April

Leeds United	v	Portsmouth
Birmingham City	v	W'hampton Wand
Newcastle United	v	Chelsea

The Parramatta P to a c



Players and Partners

ower book comes close



ers night of nights



Spanish Primera Liga



A dramatic injury-time equaliser from Valencia striker Mista kept his side on top of La Liga. The goal saw Valencia draw 2-2 at home to Real Sociedad and moved them back ahead of title rivals Real Madrid on goal difference.

Xabi Alonso put Sociedad ahead with a brilliant 64th-minute volley and then when Valencia defender Fabian Ayala was adjudged to have fouled Oscar de Paula in the box with 67 minutes gone, Valery Karpin stepped up to convert the spot-kick.

Winger Vicente Rodriguez reduced the deficit and then in the dying seconds Mista collected a loose ball on the edge of the area with just seconds remaining to fire home with a thunderous shot.

Real Madrid survived the dismissal of defender Francisco Pavon to secure a nail-biting 2-1 victory against arch rivals Atletico.

Real made the ideal start when Santiago Solari broke the deadlock early on, squeezing the ball past goalkeeper Sergio Aragonese.

However, the introduction of Themistoklis Nikolaidis after half-time paid instant dividends for Atletico and when he was tripped by Pavon in the area - an offence for which the defender was dismissed - Veljko Paunovic converted from the spot.

Both sides continued to create chances, but it was Madrid who clinched the points when Ivan Helguera headed home from close range mid-way through the second period.

Barcelona retained an outside chance of the title with a 3-0 home win over Malaga.

Javier Saviola scored his 100th league goal for the Catalunan side in the process.

Saviola opened the scoring after 18 minutes with



Deportivo La Coruna's Albert Luque (right) is fouled by Valladolid's Julio Cesar.

Luis Garcia and Philip Cocu adding goals to finish off Malaga in the first half.

Deportivo La Coruna fielded a weakened team against Valladolid and had to settle for a point after sharing a 1-1 draw at the Riazor.

It was the visitors who took the lead when Oscar Gonzalez finished off his superb run with a fine finish past second-choice goalkeeper Gustavo Munua.

Deportivo levelled things up when they were awarded a penalty after Djalminha was brought down by Jose Caminero. The Brazilian took the spot-kick himself and made no mistake from 12 yards.

Athletic Bilbao boosted their hopes of qualifying for Europe next season with a comfortable 4-0 victory over Real Zaragoza who finished the match with just nine men.

A spectacular goal from Joseba Etxeberria opened the scoring before Asier Del Horno made it two.

Zaragoza were then reduced to 10 men when Gabriel Milito was shown a straight red for an alleged elbow to Roberto Tiko.

Maio de Aquino Alvaro was dismissed soon after and it was left to Francisco Yeste to wrap things up with a late double.

A solitary strike from Real Betis' Brazilian Marcos Assuncao was enough to condemn Murcia to relegation.

Coach John Toshack needed his side to clinch an unlikely victory if they were to avoid the drop, but their hopes were dealt a hammer blow as early as the fourth minute when Assuncao put Betis ahead.

Espanyol kept their survival hopes alive with a shock 3-1 win over Osasuna.

Raul Tamudo scored the game's opener just before the break, but Osasuna levelled with a bullet of a shot from Pablo Garcia.

However, Espanyol were not to be denied and goals from Alex Fernandez and Maxi saw them home.

Second-from-bottom Celta Vigo also gained three crucial points with a vital 2-0 win over Albacete.

Juanfran and Gustavo Lopez got the goals for the visitors.

Real Mallorca failed to boost their chances of staying up, losing 2-1 at home to Villarreal.

They were made to rue a late penalty miss from Samuel Eto'o who had earlier scored from the spot to equalise Quique Alvarez's effort.

The winner came via Pedro Marti who netted after good work from Victor Fernandez before Eto'o's second spot kick was saved by Jose Manuel Reina.

Julio Baptista scored four goals as Sevilla trounced

Racing Santander to move a step closer to European football next season.

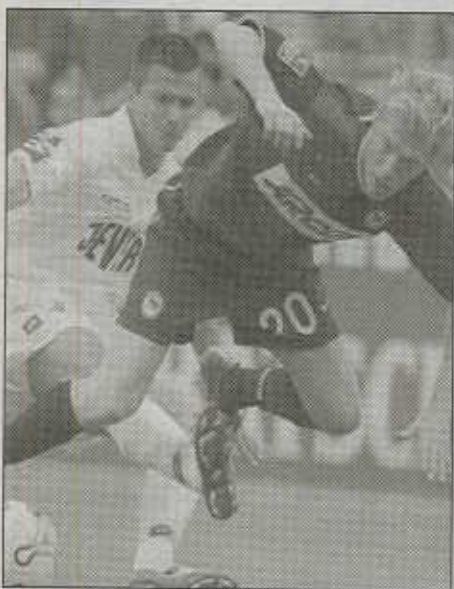
Baptista ran riot to put his side 4-0 up before Javi Guerrero pulled one back for the beleaguered visitors from the penalty spot.

Federico Magallanes cemented Sevilla's victory with a delightful chip in the final minute.

Athletic Bilbao 4 Real Zaragoza 0, Atletico Madrid 1 Real Madrid 2, Deportivo Coruna 1 Valladolid 1, Albacete 0 Celta Vigo 2, Barcelona 3 Malaga 0, Murcia 0 Real Betis 1, Osasuna 1 Espanyol 3, Real Mallorca 1 Villarreal 2, Sevilla 5 Santander 2, Valencia 2 Real Sociedad 2.										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
1 Valencia	33	21	7	5	65	23	70			
2 Real Madrid	33	21	7	5	67	41	70			
3 Barcelona	33	18	9	6	55	34	63			
4 Deportivo	33	18	7	8	53	31	61			
5 Athletic	33	14	9	10	46	40	51			
6 Osasuna	33	11	15	7	36	30	48			
7 Atletico	33	13	9	11	40	41	48			
8 Malaga	33	14	4	15	44	48	46			
9 Sevilla	33	12	9	12	45	38	45			
10 Villarreal	33	12	8	13	41	43	44			
11 Betis	33	10	13	10	40	37	43			
12 Real Sociedad	33	10	10	13	39	45	40			
13 Zaragoza	33	10	8	15	36	46	38			
14 Racing	33	10	9	14	44	56	38			
15 Valladolid	33	9	10	14	39	48	37			
16 Albacete	33	10	7	16	32	42	37			
17 Mallorca	33	10	6	17	40	59	36			
18 Espanyol	33	10	4	19	38	55	34			
19 Celta	33	7	12	14	43	60	33			
20 Murcia	33	3	11	19	25	51	20			



German Bundesliga



Moenchengladbach's Vaclav Sverkos (left) fights for the ball with Hertha Berlin's Andreas Neuendorf.

Bundesliga leaders Werder Bremen were held to a goalless draw at home to Hannover as they wasted their chance to move 10 points clear at the top.

It was not the best result for the hosts who are looking for their first Bundesliga title since 1993.

Bremen enjoyed most of the play but could not find a way past a resolute visitors' defence.

Despite the draw, Bremen lead second placed Bayern by eight points with five games remaining.

Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld found referee Markus Merk to blame after a controversial penalty decision put Borussia Dortmund on their way to a 2-0 home win over the Bundesliga champions.

Merk denied the Bavarians a very close call in the first half before later awarding Dortmund a chance from the spot, converted by Ewerthon.

In the 16th minute, Dortmund's Christian Worns, who later grabbed the host's second goal, appeared to use a hand while clearing against Roque Santa Cruz in the box.

1860 Munich fell at home to Hamburg, a result which cost coach Falko Gotz his job.

1860 avoided dropping into the relegation zone when third-bottom Hertha Berlin conceded a late equaliser at Borussia Moenchengladbach, but Gotz was told after the club's 2-1 defeat that he was no longer in charge.

Stuttgart collected maximum points with a comfortable 3-1 victory over second-bottom Eintracht Frankfurt.

Goals from Kevin Kuranyi, Alexander Hleb and Marcelo Bordon put Stuttgart well in charge at the Gottlieb-Damler-Stadion, with Alexander Schur grabbing a late consolation.

A goal from 'keeper Hans-Jorg Butt helped fourth placed Bayern Leverkusen defeat Schalke 3-2.

Butt kept his cool to convert from the penalty spot in the 76th minute to put Leverkusen 3-1 up and seal their sixth away win of the season.

Dimitar Berbatov gave Leverkusen the lead on the half-hour mark before Michael Delura equalised 11 minutes after the break.

The visitors took the lead again through Bernd Schneider and went further ahead with Butt's penalty. Mike Hanke scored an incredible second for Schalke, direct from the kick-off as Butt had not yet taken his place in goal.

Wolfsburg scored twice in each half to defeat Freiburg 4-0.

First-half goals from defender Maik Franz and striker Fernando Baiano and two more after the break by midfielder Hans Sarpei and forward Diego

Klimowicz gave the northerners three points, lifting them to 10th.

Hertha Berlin were just minutes away from climbing out of the bottom three but Ivo Ulich pulled Borussia Moenchengladbach level with four minutes to play to ensure the match finished 1-1.

Portuguese midfielder Roberto Pinto put them in the lead with a low drive from the edge of the box in the ninth minute however Moenchengladbach kept fighting and were rewarded when Czech midfielder Ivo Ulich equalised with four minutes left.

1860 Munich 1 Hamburg 2, Dortmund 2 Bayern Munich 0, Moenchengladbach 1 Hertha Berlin 1, Kaiserslautern 3 Hansa Rostock 2, Schalke 2 Bayer Leverkusen 3, VfB Stuttgart 3 Eintracht Frankfurt 1, Wolfsburg 4 Freiburg 0, Cologne 1 Bochum 2, Werder Bremen 0 Hannover 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Bremen	29	20	7	2	67	28	67
2 Bayern	29	17	8	4	63	32	59
3 Stuttgart	29	16	9	4	46	18	57
4 Leverkusen	29	15	7	7	59	36	52
5 Bochum	29	13	9	7	48	34	48
6 Dortmund	29	14	6	9	49	36	48
7 Schalke	29	11	10	8	40	35	43
8 Hamburg	29	11	6	12	39	50	39
9 Hansa	29	9	8	12	45	44	35
10 Wolfsburg	29	11	1	17	50	57	34
11 Freiburg	29	9	7	13	38	58	34
12 Hannover	29	8	9	12	44	55	33
13 Moenchengladbach	29	8	8	13	32	41	32
14 Kaiserslautern	29	10	4	15	32	50	31
15 1860 Munich	29	8	6	15	29	46	30
16 Hertha	29	6	11	12	29	52	29
17 Eintracht	29	7	5	17	29	45	26
18 Koln	29	5	5	19	24	46	20

GREEK ETHNIKI KATIGORIA



Action between the big derby Panathinaikos and Olympiakos

Proodeftiki 2 AEK Athens 4, Akrotis 3 Ionikos 0, Halkidona 0 Egaleo 1, Xanthi 1 OFI Crete 0, Panionios 2 Aris 1, Paniliakos 0 Kallithea 5, Iraklis 3 PAOK 0, Panathinaikos 2 Olympiakos 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Panathinaikos	26	20	5	1	52	15	65
2 Olympiakos	26	20	3	3	61	18	63
3 PAOK	26	17	5	4	43	22	56
4 Egaleo	26	14	6	6	34	21	48
5 AEK	26	13	6	7	49	28	45
6 Halkidona	26	12	6	8	36	32	42
7 Panionios	26	10	10	6	35	25	40
8 Iraklis	26	11	5	10	37	35	38
9 Xanthi	26	8	6	12	26	35	30
10 OFI	26	7	6	13	24	39	27
11 Ionikos	26	6	5	15	26	39	23
12 Kallithea	26	4	10	12	32	37	22
13 Aris	26	5	5	16	19	42	20
14 Akrotis	26	4	7	15	27	60	19
15 Paniliakos	26	4	7	15	26	52	19
16 Proodeftiki	26	3	8	15	20	47	17

Scottish Premier League

Celtic midfielder Stilian Petrov sparked scenes of celebration when his first-half strike secured the Glasgow club's 39th Scottish championship in a 1-0 win at Kilmarnock.

The Bulgarian raced on to Henrik Larsson's deft header to hammer home a 32nd-minute winner for the unbeaten premier league leaders.

Celtic are now 16 points ahead of Rangers who can win only a further 15.

Kilmarnock had chances with striker Kris Boyd having a first-half goal disallowed after Eric Skora fouled Bobo Balde. Boyd also missed an open goal moments later.

But a tired Celtic, clearly feeling the effects of losing Wednesday's UEFA Cup quarter-final to Spain's Villarreal, held on to wrap up their third title in four years under O'Neill.

The scenes of jubilation among the more than 10,000 travelling fans contrasted starkly with the mood at the same Rugby Park venue last May.

Rangers booked their place in next season's Champions League qualifiers with a comfortable but forgettable 2-0 victory over doomed Partick.

Steven Thompson gave Rangers a first-half lead when he stabbed home a close range effort past Jamie Langfield.

Gavin Rae made sure of the points when he netted Rangers' second just after the interval having been set up by the impressive Alan Hutton.

Such was Rangers dominance it was not until the second half that Partick had a meaningful effort on goal and even then Jamie Mitchell failed to find the target.

Hearts picked up a point with a 1-1 draw against Livingston as they attempted to recover from last weekend's shock defeat at Partick.

The Jambos dominated the start of the match and were rewarded for their confident start

when Kevin McKenna converted the easiest of chances.

A much improved Livingston fought back in the second half and earned a deserved equaliser when Colin McMenamin collected a long ball and finished superbly.

Livingston pressed for an equaliser but Hearts held on and have now all but sealed third place after

Dunfermline were also held to a 1-1 draw against Dundee United.

The Pars, in the middle of a hectic fixture pile-up, took the lead in first-half stoppage-time when the Tangerines struggled to clear a Gary Mason cross and Greg Shields was on hand to fire home.

The visitors, who dominated the first 45 minutes, got back on level terms thanks to David McCracken's close range finish just past the hour mark.

Hibernian and Dundee shared a point in a entertaining yet meaningless encounter at Dens Park which finished 2-2.

Steve Lovell gave the hosts the lead but Hibernian hit back when the prolific Derek Riordan smashed in a long distance shot.

After the break Riordan scored then missed a penalty as Hibs moved into a 2-1 lead.

The visitors were made to pay for that miss when Steven Milne's last minute equaliser earned the Dark Blues a share of the spoils.

Alex Burns hit his fourth goal of the season to send Motherwell on the way to a hat-trick of wins over Aberdeen and move his side up to fifth after a 2-0 victory at Pittodrie.

The diminutive striker stroked the ball home from the edge of the area as Terry Butcher's side dominated and, after Steven Craig's 90th minute second goal, confirmed their superiority over beleaguered Aberdeen.

French Ligue 1

Marseille maintained their impressive run of form with a close-fought 2-1 win over 10-man Lille.

The host's were left shell-shocked with barely 11 minutes gone when Lille took the lead through Mathieu Bodmer.

But Marseille hit back strongly and from a corner, Steve Marlet outjumped the Lille defence to head the ball into the top corner before going ahead for good nine minutes from time courtesy of an effort from Laurent Batlles.

A miserable week for Bordeaux was completed when they were comfortably defeated 3-1 by mid-table rivals Rennes.

Rennes had the ideal start when Olivier Sorlin put them ahead after only four minutes before Kim Kallstrom and Alexander Frei put the home side 3-0 up with two second-half goals.

That proved to be too big a mountain for out-of-sorts Bordeaux to climb although they did manage to grab a consolation goal through Marouane Chamakh's effort 15 minutes from the end.

Guingamp and Metz were forced to settle for a 1-1 draw that does little to alleviate the relegation fears of either side.

Metz will be happier with a point, especially after Moumouni Dagano saw his penalty saved by Ludovic Butelle six minutes from time.

Metz drew first blood in the ninth minute, although it was one of the home side's players who handed them their advantage.

Following a corner by Sebastien Renouard, Toifilou Maoulida blocked the view of Guingamp keeper Ronan Le Crom who, attempting to clear

the ball, punched the ball into his own net for an embarrassing own goal.

Le Crom soon redeemed himself with a handful of saves, including a superb double save to deny Renouard and Maoulida.

And those stops proved invaluable as Guingamp drew level in the 24th minute.

Dagano, the Burkina Faso-born striker, drove a powerful shot across the box which rebounded off a defender into the path of Harlington Shereni, and the Zimbabwean had no difficulty in slotting home the equaliser.

FRENCH CUP FINAL

French league minnows Sochaux won the French League Cup final beating Nantes from the penalty spot to claim their first major trophy since 1938.

Sochaux, who were overawed by Monaco in the League Cup final last year, had keeper Teddy Richert to thank for a string of superb saves throughout the match, and above all during the all-decisive penalty shoot-out.

The final finished 1-1 in regulation time after Sylvain Monsoreau levelled for Sochaux in the 18th minute to cancel out Gregory Pujol's opener five minutes earlier.

Nantes, who enjoyed the lion's share of chances throughout, were left kicking themselves in the busy second period of extra time when they missed several opportunities to put the match beyond reach.

French Cup
Nantes 1 Sochaux 1
(Sochaux win 5-4 on penalties).

Guingamp 1 Metz 1, Marseille 2 Lille 1, Rennes 3 Bordeaux 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Lyon	32	20	6	6	54	23	66
2Monaco	32	18	11	3	52	23	65
3PSG	32	18	9	5	45	24	63
4Sochaux	32	16	9	7	46	32	57
5Auxerre	32	16	6	10	50	28	54
6Marseille	32	16	5	11	46	37	53
7Nantes	32	13	8	11	40	32	47
8Lens	32	13	7	12	27	40	46
9Nice	32	10	14	8	35	31	44
10Lille	32	12	8	12	36	33	44
11Bordeaux	32	11	10	11	31	34	43
12Rennes	32	11	9	12	44	39	42
13Bastia	32	9	11	12	33	39	38
14Strasbourg	32	8	9	15	40	49	33
15Guingamp	32	9	6	17	31	50	33
16Metz	32	8	8	16	27	36	32
17Ajaccio	32	8	8	16	27	48	32
18Toulouse	32	7	9	16	24	39	30
19Montpellier	32	8	5	19	36	59	29
20Mans	32	5	10	17	22	50	25

Dutch Eredivisie

Ajax's charge towards the Eredivisie crown was provisionally held up by a determined RBC outfit with the sides drawing 1-1.

In a tightly-contested match, the hosts were rocked with less than three minutes on the clock when they fell behind to an Eric Hellemons effort.

Ajax levelled before the break when a 25-yard shot from Tomas Galasek struck the head of Rafael Van der Vaart en route to goal and deflected into the back of the net. Ajax are now eight points clear at the top.

Mateja Kezman netted twice as PSV Eindhoven recovered from their European agony with a comfortable 3-0 league win over NEC.

PSV went ahead when Kezman netted his 23rd league strike of the campaign after 37 minutes.

He smashed home his side's first penalty of the season with style after John De Jong was adjudged to have fouled Mike Zonneveld in the area.

Kezman bagged his second six minutes from time to settle any lingering nerves, before Mark van Bommel finished things off.

Feyenoord closed the gap on second-placed PSV Eindhoven to three points as they ran out 3-0 winners against mid-table Utrecht.

After a nervous opening 45 minutes they took control with second-half goals from Ebi Smolarek - who got two - and Dirk Kuijt sealing a deserved victory.

Matthew Amoah snatched a late equaliser to earn an admirable 1-1 draw for 10-man Vitesse Arnhem against Willem II.

Amoah scored in the 79th minute after beating the offside trap to cancel out Bart van den Eede's 50th-minute opener for

Willem II.

Zwolle continued their remarkable fight against relegation with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over high-flying Heerenveen.

Bert Zuurman's strike on the stroke of half-time sees them move four points ahead of rock-bottom Volendam. Former Sheffield Wednesday marksman Gerald Sibon came closest to scoring for Heerenveen.

Zwolle now trail ADO Den Haag by four points as they too claimed a vital win, beating FC Twente 1-0.

The home side took their time to settle into any sort of rhythm but once they did they scored with their first meaningful attack of the game.

The only goal of the game came when a cross from the right by Daniel Rijaard landed straight at the feet of Roy Stroevé, and his five-yard shot came off the goal-keeper and inside post before nestling into the back of the net.

RKC Waalwijk and Roda JC, two teams in mid-table obscurity, shared a point in a meaningless end of season match.

A late strike from Peter Wijker salvaged a valuable point for AZ Alkmaar against Groningen as they bid to secure a place in next season's UEFA Cup.

However, AZ levelled with just two minutes remaining when substitute Wijker netted in a goal-mouth scramble.

A brace of goals from Karim Bridji helped Volendam to a 4-2 come-from-behind win over NAC Breda - a victory which lifts them off the foot of the table.

Nourdin Boukhari put NAC ahead and Ali Boussabon then doubled their advantage.

But Maurice Buys launched the home side's fightback, Bridji equalised, Sebastian Steur put Volendam in front before Bridji sealed a superb win.

Willem II Tilburg 1 Vitesse Arnhem 1, Den Haag 1 Twente 0, PSV Eindhoven 3 NEC Nijmegen 0, Zwolle 1 Heerenveen 0, RKC Waalwijk 1 Roda JC 1, Utrecht 0 Feyenoord 3, Ajax Amsterdam 1 RBC Roosendaal 1, Groningen 1 AZ Alkmaar 1, Volendam 4 NAC Breda 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Ajax	30	22	4	4	67	29	70
2PSV	30	19	5	6	77	26	62
3Feyenoord	30	17	8	5	57	34	59
4Heerenveen	30	16	6	8	44	32	54
5Alkmaar	30	16	5	9	54	35	53
6Roda	30	12	9	9	53	37	45
7Willem II	30	12	9	9	42	47	45
8Utrecht	30	12	6	12	39	47	42
9Twente	30	13	2	15	48	48	41
10Roosendaal	30	10	10	10	32	35	40
11NAC	30	10	9	11	50	48	39
12Waalwijk	30	9	9	12	40	40	36
13Groningen	30	8	8	14	32	46	32
14NEC	30	10	1	19	40	55	31
15Den Haag	30	7	7	16	29	56	28
16Zwolle	30	5	9	16	24	53	24
17Volendam	30	6	5	19	28	70	23
18Vitesse	30	3	14	13	34	52	23

Dundee 2 Hibernian 2, Dunfermline 1 Dundee Utd 1, Hearts 1 Livingston 1, Rangers 2 Partick 0, Kilmarnock 0 Celtic 1, Aberdeen 0 Motherwell 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Celtic	32	29	3	0	98	18	90
2Rangers	33	23	5	5	66	26	74
3Hearts	33	15	10	8	47	36	55
4Dunfermline	33	12	11	10	35	43	47
5Motherwell	33	12	9	12	39	37	45
6Dundee United	33	11	9	13	39	51	42
7Hibernian	33	9	11	13	37	52	38
8Livingston	33	8	12	13	38	48	36
9Dundee	33	8	10	15	41	55	34
10Kilmarnock	33	9	5	19	39	68	32
11Aberdeen	32	8	7	17	36	51	31
12Partick	33	4	6	23	31	61	18

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE

PANTHERS STUN SAINTS

By Paul Goodwin

Against all the odds the gutsy Penrith Panthers defeated the experienced competition leaders St George Saints 3-2 on Saturday night; in the process putting an end to the Saints' previously unbroken home-record.

Despite missing some vital players, the youthful Panthers dug deep and in the end thoroughly deserved their unexpected win.

The match opened with Gabriel Mendez and Ante Dour controlling the middle of the park, providing their potent strike pair of Stuart Young and Bruno Beddoni with ample opportunities to strike deep into the Panthers' defence.

Daniel Wells, Ryan Noble, Marty McCaffery and Chad Lewis had to work extremely hard to nullify the Saints' attacking raids.

A 13th minute breakthrough for the Panthers came courtesy of Tim O'Connell, who was able to get between the defender and keeper Ricardo Patrizi, and kick a great right-footed shot that rattled the net. The goal was against the run of play, but it was a reward for a determined effort from O'Connell.

Despite being a goal down, St George continued to drive at the Panthers, with Mendez continuing to control what was becoming a very entertaining affair.

In the 24th minute Allan Wawi broke through the Saints' defence and with Tim O'Connell created an opportunity for Roger Galayini, who took his side to an unexpected and sensational 2-0 lead.

St George became increasingly desperate and pushed forward, looking to break the committed Panthers. In the

33rd minute their persistence paid off when Mendez and Raphael Bove combined to provide Stuart Young with a chance which he put away at the far post.

While there was some difficult moments, the Panthers were able to take their 2-1 lead safely into half-time.

The half-time break seemed to work well for the Panthers and they came out pushing the ball around well in the opening minutes of the second stanza.

Increasingly Luke O'Connell and Luke Boyd, in the uncustomary roles of central midfield, provided space for Allan Wawi and Jason Sciberras. Wawi soon started to prove a real thorn in the side of the St George defence.

After 58 minutes the game was all square again when Bruno Beddoni was able to get his head onto a Stuart Young cross.

At the 65 minute mark Mendez, Bove and Young combined to put Beddoni in the clear, but while Beddoni was able to get around Chad Taylor, he looked on in despair as a never-say-die Daniel Wells dived and deflected the certain goal out for a corner.

Penrith lifted from the Wells' effort and both Luke O'Connell and Marty McCaffery continued to work the dangerous Wawi into space. On one of those raids Wawi was able to place a great cross that fell to Jason Sciberras, but whose attacking header was denied by the upright.

In the 75th one of Wawi's numerous runs produced a great ball across the face of goal, which fell to Galayini to knock in the Panthers' third and winning goal.

Rassmussen brought Paul Marosevic into the contest, shortly after the goal,

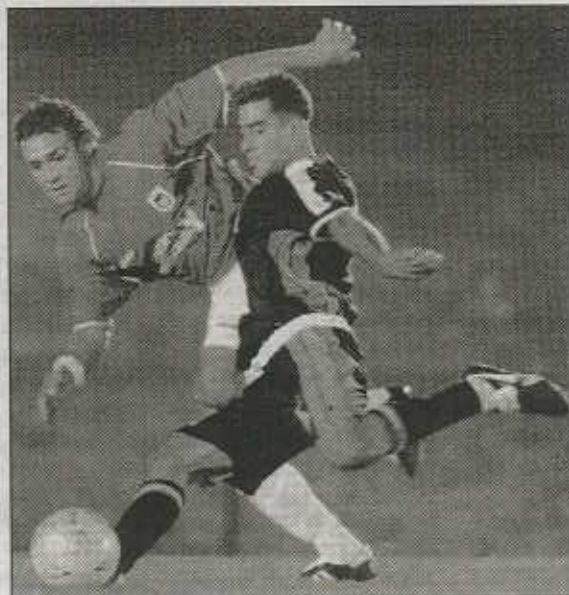
	St George Saints		2
	Penrith Panthers		3

looking for fresh legs across the middle, with a tiring Luke Boyd making way for Marosevic's entry.

The Saints' continued to drive at the Panthers; in particular Beddoni was proving a handful to contain, but Wells and Ryan Noble continued to stand up and constantly turned around the Saints' attack.

While Beddoni and Young had a couple of opportunities, so did the Panthers, with Adam Anderson almost extending the visitors' lead after some great work from O'Connell, McCaffery and Wawi.

In the 88th minute the Saints were reduced to ten men when Ivan Zelic was sent from the field for retaliation on Tim O'Connell. In the same incident Tim O'Connell sustained a leg injury and was taken from the field, his place being taken by Daniel Hinton.



Triumphant return: Roger Galayini's return to the Panthers side proved beneficial for both himself and Penrith. By bagging two out of the three Penrith goals, he has marked himself as player to watch as they battle it out for a top five spot.

White Eagles plucked by Parramatta

	Bonnyrigg White Eagles		1
	Parramatta Eagles		3

By Greg Stock

Bonnyrigg bowed out of the race for the top five with a whimper rather than a bang on Saturday night, beaten 3-1 by giant-killers Parramatta Eagles at The Serbian Centre.

Despite taking an early 1-0 lead and looking the better of the two sides throughout an action packed first-half, the wheels fell off the White Eagles machine early in the second-half when defender Tayfun Devrimol was sent off for a crude challenge on the Eagles Nathan Rivera.

The loss of Devrimol was undoubtedly the deciding factor in a game that ebbed and flowed as both sides attempted to put their best foot forward. The home side got

off to a flyer, and lay siege to the Eagles goalmouth before Devrimol was felled by Daniel Borg in the 5th minute. While the penalty did look to the naked eye to be a little soft, referee Nick Asargiotis wasted no time pointing to the spot, which Aaron Burgess duly converted.

Both sides traded blows until the 22nd minute when the speedy Nathan Rivera was bundled over by an advancing Cem Akilli just inside the penalty area. Akilli, sensing danger, was quick to race forward from his line but in haste to clear the ball, he slid (continued on page 17)

ST GEORGE SAINTS 2
(S Young 33', B Beddoni 58')
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

PENRITH PANTHERS 3
(T O'Connell 13', R Galayini 24', R Galayini 75')

ST GEORGE SAINTS: Ricardo Patrizi, Adrian Webster, Dean Culina, Ante Dour, Mirko Juric, Ivan Zelic, Raphael Bove, Gabriel Mendez (C), Cristian Cevenini (Max Sevares 70), Stuart Young, Bruno Beddoni. Sub not used: Phil Weston (RGK), Nick Tsaroutsis, George Lagoudakis, Lewis Gekis. Coach: Manny Spanoudakis

Subs not used: RGK Kurt Van Arkels, Michael Naro. Coach: Tony Rassmussen

Referee: Alex Spiroski. Assistant Referees: Jim Barnes, Vic Cmcovic. Fourth Official: Bryan Seymour

Red Card: St George: Ivan Zelic 88th (2nd yellow)

Yellow Cards: St George: Dean Culina 18th, Ivan Zelic 35th, 88th, Raphael Bove 58th, Adrian Webster 84th. Penrith Panthers: Ryan Noble 63rd, Daniel Wells 87th, Adam Anderson 67th, Tim O'Connell 88th

PENRITH PANTHERS: Chad Taylor, Daniel Wells, Ryan Noble, Chad Lewis, Martin McCaffery, Allan Wawi, Luke O'Connell, Luke Boyd (Paul Marosevic 75), Jason Sciberras (Adam Anderson 63), Tim O'Connell, (Danny Hinton 88) Roger Galayini

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 1
(A Burgess 5' pen)
PARRAMATTA EAGLES 3
(D Borg 22' pen 47', pen M Reveley 89')
at The Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Peter Munsie, Daniel Borg, John Kalso, Mark Reveley, Anthony Mittiga, Nathan Rivera, Ben Delicata, Paul Downs (Rod Hutchinson), Andy Kane (Michael Debono), Matthew Clowes, Ismael Arrarte. Coach: Trevor Morgan

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Cem Akilli, Tayfun Devrimol, Mark D'Alessandro, Shane Knight, Davrim Huseyin, Sam Larocca (Dejan Malenica), Bradley Groves (Fernando Pellegrino), Greg Collins, Vuko Tomasevic, Jimmy Aschner, Aaron Burgess. Coach: Gordon Brown

Red Card: Tayfun Devrimol (BWE) 47

Referee: Nick Asargiotis



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Demons draw Crescent

By Greg Stock

The Premier League top-five log-jam was made no easier on Sunday with Sydney Crescent Star and Blacktown City fighting out a tough nil-all draw at Lidcombe Oval.

With both sides well engrossed in a battle to maintain their position in the five, the thought of losing was more than

either side could bare, as their usual attacking skills were superseded by their defensive mindsets, turning the game into a battle of the fullbacks.

While the scoreboard attendant spent the afternoon soaking up the brilliant autumn sunshine, both defences rolled their sleeves up, keeping chances for either side to an absolute minimum.

The Crescent Star back-three of Askin

	Sydney Crescent Star		0
	Blacktown City Demons	Perfection	0



On the defence: Askin Oygur (above), along with Ugur Tokdogan and Evangelos Petratos, was the backbone of the Crescent Star side

Oygur, Ugur Tokdogan and Evangelos Petratos were under the most pressure as Blacktown attempted to lift the attacking tempo in the second-half by using striker Luke Roodenburg as a battering ram.

The two key chances of the match fell to Roodenburg, who uncharacteristically mis-kicked a shot in the 75th minute when one on one with Vaneja Ivesa, before the two key combatants again clashed in a tangle of arms and legs just minutes from time.

Steaming onto a deft through ball from Joshua Maguire, Roodenburg and Ivesa met at the near post, both players with eyes only for the ball clashed heavily and were forced to retire.

"At some key stages in the game it looked like we might have the ability to pinch a win, but full credit to Crescent Star, they defended strongly and we weren't good enough to find the net," Blacktown City coach Brian Brown said.

"Our line-up today was a bit thin, with injuries and suspensions taking their toll,

and it ended up being a real slog for us."

Brown was left fuming at an incident midway through the first half when Antonio Faria's pleas for a penalty were turned down by referee Jonathan Streater.

Faria had burst through a couple of feeble tackles and attempted to round the advancing Ivesa by pushing the ball past him and attempting to re-gather.

Both players collided at the critical moment of Faria pushing the ball forward, but Streater waved play-on much to the chagrin of the Blacktown coaching bench.

"It looked like a genuine penalty to us, but that's football sometimes, what one referee might give, another one doesn't," Brown said.

Shortly after the incident Faria smashed a shot onto the crossbar from distance, compounding the misfortune.

"We really needed to win today and the draw places us in the unfortunate situation where we have to fight to the death over the next three weeks looking for a top five spot," said Brown.

The same can be said for the home side.

SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR 0
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 0
at Lidcombe Oval, Auburn

SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR: Vaneja Ivesa (Wojtek Zarzycki), Askin Oygur, Evangelos Petratos, Ugur Tokdogan, Shane Hammond, Daniel Willoughby, Yavus Ekinici, Philip Marzac, Orhan Dincer (Joe Bruni), Terry Aislas, Tolgay Ozbey
Coach: Yasin Ozdenak

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley, Ben Willard, Paul Karbon, Patrick Gatt, Damien Foxe, Dominic Magill, Kain Rastall, Joshua Maguire, Antonio Faria (Bishara Stephan), Simon Catanzaro (Brian Vaneja), Luke Roodenburg (Steve Kayes)
Coach: Brian Brown

Referee: Jonathan Streater

Bonnyrigg's big whimper

(continue from page 16)

into Rivera in a clumsy fashion as both players crashed to the turf.

For the second time referee Nick Asargiotis was well positioned to rule a penalty, Daniel Borg making up for his earlier blemish to square the ledger.

But stranger things were to happen, just two minutes after the break. Rivera again broke the White Eagles defence and with Devrimol in hot pursuit, the defender attempted a tackle from behind, succeeding only in bundling Rivera over.

Asargiotis left in no doubt of the penalty and the send-off, leaving the White Eagles to finish the game with just ten men.

Despite their lack of numbers in the key exchanges, the home side did stage a fight-back, but with Vuko Tomasevic well held by Ben Delicata, they struggled to get their strikers into shooting range as the minutes ticked away.

Even the normally influential Sam Larocca fell out of sorts, and without Bradley Groves, taken from the field midway through the first-half with a twisted knee, there would be no comebacks.

The Eagles wrapped up the game in the final few minutes when Mark Reveley sauntered forward to score one of his trademark headers, pigeon-holing off an Ismael Arrate corner.

Berries dodge relegation bullet

	Central Coast United		2
	Canterbury-Marrickville		2

By Paul Goodwin

The battle for the wooden spoon - a typical 'six-pointer' - ended up all square at Plum Park on Saturday night, with Canterbury twice coming from a goal down against Central Coast to keep their hopes of avoiding the wooden spoon alive with a fighting 2-2 draw.

Restored to the home side after missing his team's last game in Canberra, Nathan Byrn netted a superb goal in the 72nd minute and it looked as if the locals might finally lay their home game woes to rest.

But Byrn, who had celebrated the birth of his son Riley a week earlier, had to see his strike cancelled out by the Berries, who twice rubbed out the Coast boys' lead on the night.

The first-half was an evenly contested forty-five minutes, though Steve Karavatakis did manage to get through to face Coast keeper Matthew Trott a couple of times, but he failed to capitalise.

Bob Catlin got down well in the 23rd to deny Sean Matthews at his near post, when Marc Falzon had done some good work on the right.

Allan Picken headed one over the bar and Morgan Cawley's low cross from the right just shaved the left hand post once Karavatakis had done the early work as the first period drew to an end.

After a Central Coast free kick had not been cleared from near the box the ball fell to Doug West whose great strike from 25-yards found the top left corner with Catlin well beaten.

It was a very good goal and few would have stopped it. But no sooner had this 48th minute goal gone in than Canterbury equalised from a free kick.

The ball was floated in by Harding and at the far post - unmarked - Picken was able to chest the ball over the line.

"It was very poor defensive work by us," Coast coach Jim Foley said after the game. The game opened right up after these two goals and Haynes, for the home side and Karavatakis, for the visi-

tors, both went close before the Coast side hit the front again in the 72nd.

A sweeping move begun by Matthews saw West get to the right by-line and cross immediately for a smart finish by Byrn on the goal line.

But once again the Berries were able to fight their way back and level the scores, this time in the 81st.

A corner on the left was lifted to the far side by Stuart Banks and then a shot

from Gardiner was blocked. Karavatakis was first to react and bundled the loose ball over the line.

"Not once, but twice, in the same game we gave silly goals away from set plays," Foley said, clearly not happy with his side's defensive efforts.

"We played good football only to give away goals like that. I don't know what's wrong with them. We talk about this all the time in training, but they go out on the park and forget it all when they get out there in a match."

Foley was not happy, but at least Coast kept the Berries two points behind them.

"We still stay in touch and have three games to turn things around," agreed Canterbury co-coach Spiro Hantzis at the end of the game.

CENTRAL COAST UNITED 2
(D West 48', N Byrn 74')
CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE ... 2
(A Picken 50', S Karavatakis 84')
at Plum Park, Lisarow

CENTRAL COAST UNITED: Matthew Trott, Mitchell Daley, David Brewer, Sean Matthews, Beau Busch, Daniel Surridge, Doug West, John Bennis (Matt Mitchell 72), Knehan Shepherd (Nathan Byrn 26), Marc Falzon (C), Peter Haynes
Sub not used: RGK Ben Xerri, Gareth Jenkins, Scott Barwick
Coach: Jim Foley

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE: Bob Catlin (C), Cormack Bagley, George Souris, Sasa Utjesenovic, David Harding (Ben Price 77), Stuart Banks, David Gardiner, Paul Bourke (Atheas Kotsopoulos 63), Morgan Cawley (Archie Markopoulos 61), Allan Picken, Steve Karavatakis
Subs not used: RGK Murray Nelson
Coaches: Bob Catlin and Spiro Hantzis

Referee: Greg Leverton
Assistant Referees: Gareth Hockings and David Moore
Fourth Official: Darren Sprod
Yellow Cards: Central Coast: Nil; Canterbury-Marrickville: David Gardiner 47, George Souris 67, Morgan Cawley 70



ROUND 18

A TALE OF TWO CITIES SEES TOWN OVER DALE

By Paul Goodwin

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 1 ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 0

A power failure and an Easter weekend hangover didn't stop a massive crowd gathering at Jensen Park to watch the Lions edge out Rockdale in the round 19 grudge match on Easter Monday.

Not only did Bankstown put down the Suns on the day, they also may well have put paid to Rockdale hopes of a finals berth, leaving them desperately short of points.

Fourteen minutes into the game the stadium was plunged into darkness, due to a power failure. Once the lights came on 15 minutes later the game recommenced and in the 36th minute the home team grabbed the winning goal with some typical Matt Borg flair.

Anthony Doumanis made a very fast run down the right and then elected to play the ball back to Milan Bosnar, 40-yards out from goal.

With a cluster of Rockdale defenders some distance in front of him, Bosnar somehow found a chink of light between them all and threaded the ball through for Borg to latch onto.

As Allen came out to challenge, Borg - who had left the defenders in his wake with his speed off the mark - cleverly feinted and went around the keeper before carefully placing the ball in the empty net.

Before that happened Richard Lukic had put a near-post header narrowly wide from a corner and Doumanis had made a searching run, but had offered his shot into the grateful arms of Trinity Allen in the 30th minute.

At the other end Lions' keeper Zlatko Josevski had come to his side's rescue, as he was to do many times later in the game, by making a reflex save following a ball played in to his near post from the right in the 35th.

Borg could have had more than his one goal, but was closed down well by the experienced Suns' backline after he had opened his account.

In the 48th he was at the near post to race onto a by-line cross from Dimitri Nicolaou, but tried to finish acrobatically and failed to connect.

After another Bankstown miss Rockdale began to make their presence felt and it needed some superb keeping from Josevski to keep Denis Alilovic, Zenon Caravella and Harry James at bay.

There were more chances for Borg, right at the end but Allen was too smart when the tall striker came at him with the ball at his feet and the Rockdale custodian won the battle of wits to snatch the ball away just in time.

Borg batters the Tigers

By Paul Goodwin

Rock-hard defence and a scintillating attack were the keys to Bankstown's 3-0 victory over A.P.I.A. on Sunday, keeping them well-placed for a finals run this season.

A.P.I.A. looked lively going forward but lacked the killer punch in the penalty area and never really recovered from some early set-backs.

Former A.P.I.A. man Matt Borg was partnered by old team mate Marc Hoenselaars up front and was in inspired form.

In the 9th minute Borg was put through from deep, and when keeper Stewart Vella came racing Borg's goal-bound shot flew narrowly beyond the right-hand upright.

Had Borg scored his side would have been two goals up inside ten minutes for he had already added to his formidable tally for the season with a seventh minute strike after Robbie Gomez had sent over an in-swinging corner from the left that allowed his free-scoring team mate to tap in, unattended, at the centre of the goal.

A.P.I.A., through Norman Tome and Andrew Clark, could have drawn level inside the next ten minutes but some smart work by Lions' keeper Zlatko Josevski and a goal-line clearance from

	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers Continental	0
	Bankstown City Lions HYUNDAI	3

Paul Wearne denied the former and Clark could only find the side netting.

Vella was kept busy for much of the first-half and had to tip an excellent George Nohra 20-yard effort over the bar in the 20th minute before conceding a second to Borg on the half-hour.

Sasha Trajceviski put the speedy Borg away down the right and with the confidence of a man about to join Ilija Prenzowski at the head of the scorers' list, Borg slid the ball under the body of the keeper with some style.

A brave save from Josevski in the 34th denied Zlatko Arambasic a chance to pull a goal back for A.P.I.A. after a fine cross from Jeremy Brown.

James Monie also moved menacingly close to connecting with a header from an A.P.I.A. corner but Josevski once again was alert in the 38th, this time punching clear in the centre of his goal.

The second half saw A.P.I.A. well on top but unable to press home their territorial advantage.

Arambasic managed an acrobatic effort

that saw the ball clear the bar easily in the 80th and a dozen corners came and went and still the locals had nothing to show for it.

Great and desperate defence by the Lions kept a very keen A.P.I.A. attack at bay for the last half-hour and eventually a fast break saw the visitors score a third.

Borg was looking for his hat trick when racing onto a cross from the right in

stoppage time but his initial effort was partially saved and substitute Phil Hartshorn gleefully picked up the crumbs to make it 3-0 at the finish.

The Lions were without Milan Bosnar, Demetri Nicolaou, Anthony Doumanis and Sean Babic and called on veteran Saso Boskovski to bridge the gap in defence and he was one of the stand-outs on the day.

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS 0 BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 3 (M Borg 7', 30', P Hartshorn 81') at Lambert Park, Leichhardt	BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Zlatko Josevski, Paul Wearne, Richard Lukeic (C), Saso Boskovski, Sasha Trajceviski, Alex Trpkoski, Steve Liavas, George Nohra (Ornar Saadi 77), Robbie Gomez, Marc Hoenselaars (Phil Hartshorn 86), Matt Borg Subs not used: RGK Ivan Kovacevic, Jodi Korocz, Paul Medulla Coach: Andy Papoulias
A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Stewart Vella, Paul Dee, David Barrett (Michael Galluzzo 76), Damon Langan (C) (Anthony Tesoro 66), Robbie Hooker, Andrew Clark, Jeremy Brown, Paul Blakapic, Norman Tome, Zlatko Arambasic, James Monie (Robbie Stanton 59) Subs not used: RGK Luke Fernia, Tony Alilovic Coach: Les De Celis	Referee: Srebrn Delovski Assistant Referees: Lindsay Edmunds and John Soranidis Fourth Official: Atila Stibinger Yellow Cards: A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt: Nil; Bankstown: Zlatko Josevski 71, Sasha Trajceviski 68, George Nohra 77

Dashing Danny sinks Suns

	Rockdale City Suns KIA	2
	Belconnen Blue Devils SPINNY	2

By Greg Stock

There were no winners at Seymour Shaw Park on Saturday night.

Belconnen coach Chris Tanzey and Suns boss Ivan Petkovic were united in their sadness as both sides blew chances to win the game and get themselves a little closer in the race for the top five.

Belconnen failed to close a five-point gap on St George by anything but a point, while the Suns post-season ambitions all but melted away when they allowed an 86th minute Daniel Macor penalty to pull victory from their grasp.

"For the spectators this game had it all and with both teams playing well it was a great game to watch," Rockdale coach Ivan Petkovic said.

Both sides fought tooth and nail. In terms of possession and chances, the home side was clearly on top, but again their Achilles heel came back to haunt them; their lack of punch on the forward line ultimately proving their undoing.

At the other end of the park, Belconnen played their usual defensive game, pushing forward in well-constructed moves on the break.

Twice they came back from one-goal deficits, but unable to muster a decisive blow inside an action packed last five minutes that would have seen them close the gap on St. George.

Rockdale got themselves on the scoreboard in the 11th minute when Denis Alilovic finished off a spectacular move that saw the ball pass through six sets of feet on its way to Alilovic.

Ante Juric, Tony Ju, Ante Moric and Harry James all having a hand in the goal that saw Alilovic beat Blue Devils goalkeeper Anthony Giannasca with a fierce drive from the edge of the area.

Four minutes from half-time, Belconnen manufactured an equaliser, swooping on a rare defensive blunder from Joe Moric, Alex Castro fired a quick pass to Ilija Prenzowski who successfully went one-on-one with Trinity Allen.

In the second-half, Rockdale took advantage of a glut of possession to take a deserved 2-1 lead. James put away a shot after a goalmouth scramble ensued from an Ante Moric corner.

Coach Ivan Petkovic showed his frustration as twice the Suns had shots from corners cleared off the line by defenders

with the goalkeeper well beaten.

But just as quickly as they could have won it, the Suns lost it in defence, as Matthews Valeri was bought down by Richard Plesa in the 86th minute.

Up stepped Daniel Macor, his goal sinking the top-five campaign for the Suns and throwing his side a lifeline for the last frantic few minutes, though the stout Suns defending saw the game to a draw.

"It was a disappointing result for us, but I was very pleased with the way we played tonight and to draw against the team running second is no disgrace," Petkovic said, "sadly our position is such

that we need points and with the pressure mounting every week some of the players are putting extra pressure on themselves and it shows.

"We are still a mathematical chance but we need to win all three of our remaining games and hope results go our way. We'll still be fighting right to the end."

"Losing a key player like Joe Moric didn't help our cause, but we did struggle a little at the back tonight. Full credit to Belconnen, they are an excellent side and deserve their spot at the top of the league."

Without the services of Zenon Caravella - who has struggled all week with flu - coach Ivan Petkovic will face a tough week worrying about defender Joe Moric.

Moric was replaced early in the second-half with back problems and left the field in some discomfort.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 2 (D Alilovic 12', H James 63')	BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: Anthony Giannasca, Adrian Dowling, Lee Pietrukowski, Oscar Zamora, Ilija Prenzowski (Nic Purdue 85'), Daniel Macor, Michael Katz, Alex Castro, Topica Popovich, Anthony Galliozzi (Matthew Valeri 78')
BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 2 (I Prenzowski 41', D Macor 86' pen) at Seymour Shaw Park, Miranda	Coach: Chris Tanzey
ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Trinity Allen, Richard Plesa, Peter Apolevski (Daniel Kukucka 86'), Ante Juric, Harry James, Ante Moric, Nick Orlic, Joe Moric (Tony Sekulic 53'), Ivan Bosnar, Tony Ju, Denis Alilovic. Coach: Ivan Petkovic	Yellow Cards: A.Moric (rcs) 26', Zamora (bbd) 54', Castro (bbd) 73', Orlic (rcs) 86', Katz (bbd) 81' Referee: Alex Glasgow Assistant Referees: Atila Stibinger and Nick Kimber Fourth Official: Nil



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FIRST GRADE RESULTS & TABLES

(ROUND 18 FIXTURE)

Bankstown City Lions 1 (M Borg 36')	Rockdale City Suns 0
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 (A Burgess 5' pen)	Parramatta Eagles 3 (D Borg 22', 47', M Reveley 89')
St George Saints 2 (S Young 33', B Beddoni 58')	Penrith Panthers 3 (T O'Connell 13', R Galayini 24', 75')
Central Coast United 2 (D West 48', N Byrn 74')	Canterbury-Marrickville 2 (A Picken 50', S Karavatakis 84')
Rockdale City Suns 2 (D Alilovic 13', H James 53')	Belconnen Blue Devils 2 (I Prenzowski 42', D Macor 85' pen)
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 0	Bankstown City Lions 3 (M Borg 7', 30', P Hartshorn 91')
Sydney Crescent Star 0	Blacktown City Demons 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
St George Saints	19	14	2	3	42	21	21	44
Belconnen Blue Devils	19	12	4	3	41	23	18	40
Sydney Crescent Star	19	9	5	5	26	16	10	32
Bankstown City Lions	19	10	2	7	37	31	6	32
Blacktown City Demons	19	9	3	7	36	24	12	30
Penrith Panthers	19	9	2	8	24	34	-10	29
Rockdale City Suns	19	6	6	7	28	32	-4	24
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	7	2	10	32	30	2	23
Parramatta Eagles	19	5	5	9	27	30	-3	20
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	19	6	2	11	19	31	-12	20
Central Coast United	19	4	3	12	22	44	-22	15
Canterbury Marrickville	19	3	4	12	23	41	-18	13

GRADE 20 RESULTS & TABLES

(ROUND 18 FIXTURE)

Bankstown City Lions 2 (J Aneviski 55', S Boskovski 88')	Rockdale Suns 3 (L Da Silva 21', 48', I Kraljevic 81')
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 (M Sartoretto 35')	Parramatta Eagles 0
St George Saints 2 (D Clifford 36', S Keramea 51' pen)	Penrith Panthers 2 (K Van Arkels 15' pen, D Hinton 42')
Central Coast United 2 (B Murrell 70', J McMinimee 73')	Canterbury-Marrickville 0
Rockdale City Suns 1 (D Wilson 3')	Belconnen Blue Devils 5 (R Bray 22', M Valeri 37', D Leet 75', 77', 82')
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 6 (M Vass 16', 26', 85', M Mengi 47', 54', B Jenke 72')	Bankstown City Lions 0
Sydney Crescent Star 1 (C Jasli 66')	Blacktown City Demons 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	19	13	3	3	38	9	29	42
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	19	13	3	3	43	16	27	42
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	11	5	3	41	24	17	38
Penrith Panthers	19	9	4	6	33	23	10	31
Blacktown City Demons	19	8	4	7	30	24	6	28
Belconnen Blue Devils	19	7	5	7	25	24	1	26
Bankstown City Lions	19	5	5	9	19	42	-23	20
Central Coast United	19	4	7	8	25	31	-6	19
Canterbury Marrickville	19	5	4	10	30	43	-13	19
St George Saints	19	4	5	10	24	33	-9	17
Rockdale City Suns	19	4	5	10	23	49	-26	17
Sydney Crescent Star	19	4	4	11	20	33	-13	16

NEXT ROUND 20

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat. 24th April	7.00pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sat. 24th April	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Penrith Panthers	Canterbury-Marrickville	Sat. 24th April	7.00pm	Cook Park (St Marys)
Rockdale City Suns	Central Coast United	Sat. 24th April	3.00pm	Seymour Shaw
Bankstown City Lions	Sydney Crescent Star	Sun. 25th April	3.00pm	Jensen Park
Parramatta Eagles	St George Saints	Mon. 26th April	3.00pm	Melita Stadium

GRADE 20

HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Belconnen Blue Devils	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat. 24th April	4.30pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sat. 24th April	5.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Penrith Panthers	Canterbury-Marrickville	Sat. 24th April	5.00pm	Cook Park (St Marys)
Rockdale City Suns	Central Coast United	Sat. 24th April	1.00pm	Seymour Shaw
Bankstown City Lions	Sydney Crescent Star	Sun. 25th April	1.00pm	Jensen Park
Parramatta Eagles	St George Saints	Mon. 26th April	1.00pm	Melita Stadium

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Sunday 18th April 2004

17	Ilija Prenzowski (BBD), Matthew Borg (BCL)
12	Bruno Beddoni (SG), Daniel Macor (BBD)
9	Jason Connolly (PP), Steve Karavatakis (CMO/RCS), Aaron Burgess (BWE)
8	Daniel Watkins (SG), Denis Alilovic (RCS)
7	Nathan Byrn (CCU)
6	Anthony Galliozzi (BBD), Sean Babic (BCL), Luke Roodenburg (BCD), Dominic McGill (BCD), Filip Marzec (SCS), Peter Haynes (CCU), Roger Galayini (PP)
5	Norman Tome (AL), Tony Ju (RCS), Sam Larocca (CMO/BWE), Ben Deighan (RCS), Tolgay Ozbey (SCS), Ante Deur (SG), Jimmy Aschner (BWE)
4	Paul Urlovic (BCD), Ben Delicata (PE), David Arranz (BBD), Tony Faria (BCD), George Nohra (BCL), Raphael Bove (SG), Zlatko Arambasic (ALT)

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE TIPPING COLUMN



PAUL GOODWIN
SOCCER NSW JOURNALIST
A.P.I.A.
BONNYRIGG
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
DRAW
DRAW

Points = 42



TARYN ROCKALL
NSW SAPPHIRES CAPTAIN
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
DRAW
ST GEORGE

Points = 45



ANDY PASCHALIDIS
ELITE SPORTS TRAVEL
BELCONNEN
BONNYRIGG
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
SYDNEY CRESCENT
PARRAMATTA

Points = 47



GREG STOCK
SOCCER NSW JOURNALIST
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN CITY
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
DRAW
ST GEORGE

Points = 48



'PEANUTS'
THE MONKEY
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN CITY
DRAW
ROCKDALE
SYDNEY CRESCENT
ST GEORGE

Points = 45



ROUND 20 PREVIEW

WITH PAUL GOODWIN & GREG STOCK



Belconnen Blue Devils VS A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers



**Saturday 24th April at McKellar Soccer Centre
Kick-off 7.00pm First Grade / 4.30pm Grade 20**

Second placed Belconnen Blue Devils must be getting excited about the still remote, but certainly possible, chance of overhauling leaders St George before the end of the season.

Here at the McKellar Soccer Centre, against an enigmatic A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers, they have a great chance to keep the pressure on the League leaders St George, who have now lost star striker Daniel Watkins to Malaysia and face a very tricky final three games before they can be hailed as Minor-Premiers.

Belconnen have done nothing particularly spectacular during this season, but were one of the most admired sides even before the season got under way.

The Blue Devils have certainly confirmed those high opinions held about them by neutral observers with solid and stable showings in every game they

have played this season.

The Blue Devils are very hard to beat, anywhere, but especially so at home and it is hard to see A.P.I.A. being as worried about this one now with the Continental Tyres Cup semi-final looming four days later.

A.P.I.A. head - coach Les De Celis indicated that he will be taking some younger and fresher faces to Canberra for experience after his star-studded line up once again failed to impress at home to Bankstown.

"Look at our front line," he said. "These three scored all the goals last season and headed the scorers for this League."

This year they have managed just 19 between them and that is fewer than Central Coast have managed and they are almost running last."



Blacktown City Demons VS Bonnyrigg White Eagles



**Saturday 24th April at Gabbie Stadium
Kick-off 7.00pm First Grade / 5.00pm Grade 20**

Blacktown had to grind out a result against Crescent Star last weekend and here, back at The Gabbie, they will be looking to their rather frail attacking force to find some form again and bang in a few goals against one of the bigger scorers in the competition.

Bonnyrigg all but kissed their Finals' football fancies goodbye when they tumbled to Parramatta Eagles last Saturday at the Serbian Centre.

Having gone into the game in cracking form, it was one game they could not afford to lose. They now need to win all three of their remaining matches, starting with this one, ahead of their vital Continental Cup semi-final on Wednesday night.

Blacktown, too, have a Cup commitment the same night so neither side will be as focussed as they might be, given the prestige of the Cup itself compared to the

Premier League.

The Demons have been struggling to put out a fit side every week and the injuries continue to trouble them.

If they can get a competitive side on the park they are sure to battle away and may again be satisfied with a point here, just as they were against Crescent Star.

That won't sit too well with Bonnyrigg White Eagles who will be going all-out in attack as they now have nothing else to lose.

They have a bigger and fitter squad than Blacktown, and so can afford to be more cavalier here.

It could be a very entertaining encounter and whichever Brown-coached side wins we know there will be a good after-match quote to match the smile on the face of either Brian of Blacktown or Gordon of Bonnyrigg.



Rockdale City Suns VS Central Coast United



**Saturday 24th April at Seymour Shaw
Kick-off 3.00pm First Grade / 1.00pm Grade 20**

Any chance the Suns might have of resurrecting their top five campaign goes on the line this week with the visit of the struggling Central Coast side.

Despite boasting one of the most experienced squads in the league, the winners circle has seemingly eluded the Suns, who have won just one of their past nine games. That run of indifferent form has seen them slide from third to seventh where they sit seven competition points behind fifth spot.

"We are still focused on winning as many matches as we can but we have to rely on other teams to slip up if we are to finish in the top five," coach Ivan Petkovic said "we are in desperate need of points, we basically need nine points from our final three matches and that is going to take a huge effort from everybody at the club."

Petkovic will have nippy midfielder Zenon Caravella

back, after he missed last weekend clash with Belconnen after a dose of the flu.

Hard-man Joe Moric is also in some doubt with back problems and may be replaced by Tony Sekulic in the starting eleven.

The Coasties snapped a five-game losing streak to draw with bottom side Canterbury last week, but will face an anxious three weeks that may decide their fate for next season.

They desperately need a win to lift them away from the bottom of the table and possible relegation and will be keen to put their best foot forward this week.

In three league games between these two clubs, the Suns hold a slender advantage with one win and two draws. They'll also go into this game as favourites to condemn the Coasties to another week of misery.



Penrith Panthers VS Canterbury-Marrickville



**Saturday 24th April at Cook Park
Kick-off 7.00pm First Grade / 5.00pm Grade 20**

Hands up those who actually tipped Penrith to beat St. George? Only a true Panthers fan would have given their side any hope, given that they would be without two of their best players in Peter Bennett and Jason Connolly.

But this Penrith side is made of sterner stuff than that, and despite a long injury list they achieved mission impossible and pulled themselves to within one competition point of a return to the top five.

By contrast, Canterbury were engaged in a battle royale of their own last Saturday night, slugging it out with the Coasties at Plum Park to see who would be the likely favourite for relegation.

Sadly for the Berries the game ended in a draw, meaning that they'll need to try and manufacture some points over the next three weeks to try and avoid the

dreaded drop. Their form guide doesn't make pleasant reading - their last win coming ten starts ago when they knocked over the Eagles at Melita Stadium 2-1. Since then they have posted eight losses and just two draws, not the ideal preparation when you're facing a trip to Cook Park.

Penrith themselves have been rather enigmatic at their home ground, having won four and drawn one from nine games played. They have won three of their last five and with their aspirations for a top spot on the line they will start overwhelming favourites.

In seven league meetings between the two clubs, Penrith have won two and drawn two and the Berries have taken three. In their meeting at Henson Park earlier this season, Penrith defeated Canterbury 2-1 with goals to Jason Connolly and Daniel McCann.



Bankstown City Lions VS Sydney Crescent Star



**Sunday 25th April at Jensen Park
Kick-off 3.00pm First Grade / 1.00pm Grade 20**

Bankstown has a very hard run home, perhaps the hardest of the contenders for those third, fourth and fifth places this season.

After a rather close win against rivals Rockdale Suns they came up against A.P.I.A. last weekend and have never looked more driven by desire to win than they did in the last half-hour of that match at Lambert Park.

With a three goal lead and with up to six first team regulars missing the Lions worked themselves into the ground to contain a very lively and experienced A.P.I.A. attack.

It will be interesting to see how Lions coach Andy Papoulas goes with his team selections here, as he has to decide whether to reward the side that did so well at Lambert Park or restore some of the missing players to

his starting eleven against the in-form and very tough Crescent Star.

The visitors are one of the most accomplished sides in the league right now.

They have a very hard working unit and keep their heads on the ground; there is certainly no getting carried away with their relative success so far.

This is a derby really, as the two grounds are barely a few miles apart and the crowd should be another good one, following what the Lions got for the very exciting Easter Monday game against rivals Rockdale.

Bankstown should be able to play Sean Babic and attacking midfielder Anthony Doumanis here, but it will be tempting to play pin-up attackers Borg and Hoenselaars up front again as it seemed a potent attacking force against A.P.I.A..



Parramatta Eagles VS St George Saints



**Monday 26th April at Melita Stadium
Kick-off 3.00pm First Grade / 1.00pm Grade 20**

The giant killers of the league, the Eagles are currently in the middle of a purple patch in form having claimed the scalps of Bonnyrigg and A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt in the past three weeks to move themselves well clear of the relegation zone.

Both wins have also come away from home, which sets this clash up with traditional rivals rather nicely.

St George themselves haven't been at their best in recent weeks having dropped two of their last six starts. Two of their three losses this season have come away from home and with the Premiership trophy just two wins away from being claimed, they'll have every reason to chase a win against an un-predictable Parramatta Eagles outfit.

Star striker Daniel Watkins has played his last game for the club and returned to Johor in Malaysia, the duties

up front falling to the experienced pair of Bruno Beddoni and Stuart Young.

Veteran striker Beddoni is also inching himself back into some sort of form having found the net three times in the Saints last five League-outings. His presence this week is vital to the Saints chances especially with the Premiership trophy at stake.

As two of the more traditional rivals in Premier League football, both teams have been slugging it out in the state league and national leagues since 1967.

In 24 state league meetings, the honours lie with the visitors who have won nine and drawn eight, compared to the Eagles seven.

In round one at St George Stadium, the Saints took the Eagles apart winning in convincing fashion 3-0 with goals to Watkins, Beddoni and Ante Deur.



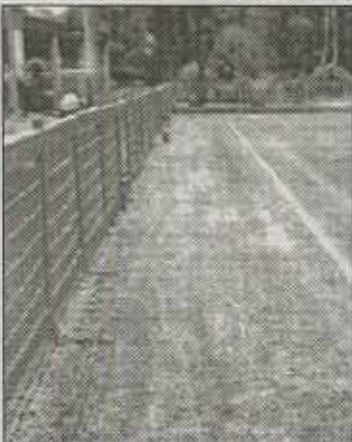
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FROM THE SIDELINES

WITH GREG STOCK



SAINTLY STRIKER JOINS JOHOR

St George striker Daniel Watkins has left the Saints agreeing to terms with Malaysian club Johor FA. An integral part of the Saints line-up, Watkins jetted out ten days ago and played his first game for his new club over the past weekend.

"On behalf of everyone at the St George Saints we wish to thank Daniel for his significant contribution to our season," coach Manny Spanoudakis said, "Daniel is very popular and well-liked player who always gave one hundred percent on the park and was a gentleman off the park. We wish him every success in his new challenge."

Watkins played 19 games for the Saints this year (16 starting appearances plus three substitute appearances) scoring ten goals, including two games and two goals in Continental Cup games. His departure allowing Spanoudakis to pair veterans Bruno Beddoni and Stuart Young on the forward line.



"I swear ref, I didn't touch him"

DERBY PACKS 'EM IN

Anybody doubting the spectator attraction of derby games in the Premier League certainly wasn't at Jensen Park a week ago for the game between Bankstown City and Rockdale City Suns.

Three thousand plus fans packed the joint which included a full grandstand, and an outer perimeter fence bulging with people who were five and six deep in parts.

While the game itself was a terrific spectacle, players of both sides gave the occasion the thumbs up stating that the huge fan interest in the game made the game one of the matches of the season.

Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis also added his own personal thumbs up to the match, meeting with players before kick-off.



"Hang on, if I'm a Dragon I should be able to fly": Adrian Webster taking his team logo a little too much to heart during a Round 19 match

plying his trade in the First Division with Wollongong United, but with a pedigree that includes National League experi-

WOODY BACK ON THE BENCH

Greg Woodhouse may be 44 years of age but there is still life in the old legs yet. The Formeroo is answering the call to arms from long-time friend and former A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt team mate Paul Carter, donning the goalkeeping gloves for one last cameo.

Carter, currently head coach at MSC Liverpool, had a crisis with a number of his goalkeepers sick or injured and needed a hand. Woodhouse came to his aid playing a full game in the Under-20's against Manly-Warringah Dolphins two weeks ago.

Woodhouse was then asked to sit on the bench for first grade where he was seen enjoying a coke and a sausage roll, while possibly having his fingers crossed that his services wouldn't be required. According to Woodhouse the match was his first competitive game since 1995, and despite his involvement the game went to Manly 2-1.

GENERAL SEEKS TROOPS

Peter 'The General' Sarikakis is looking for a few experienced hands to help his young Minotaurs fight their way up the Winter Super League table.

The General is contactable via 0412 407 830.

DRAGONS FIND THEIR FIGHT(S)

The high-flying Fraser Park Dragons have confirmed that three games for their dual home ground at Jubilee Oval in Kogarah.

The Dragons will play Fairfield Bulls (May 16th), Hajduk Wanderers United (July 4th) and Sutherland Sharks (August 1st) at the venue which boasts an excellent football pitch and premium grandstand facilities.

HOLY TRINITY, WHAT A REVELATION

For the last two seasons he has been

ence with Wollongong City and a stint at the A.I.S. it is no wonder Trinity Allen has been a revelation since assuming the number one shirt for Rockdale City Suns.

In the absence of the injured Peter Trajceviski, Allen has done remarkably well in such a short space of time, lending FTS to consider him highly for 'comeback kid of the year'!

NEW CALEDONIA AND THE WANDERERS

Hajduk Wanderers United will be playing host to the New Caledonian National Team on May 3rd at Hajduk Stadium, kick-off is scheduled for 7.30p.m.

REUNION FOR 75-YEAR OLD SHARKS

One of NSW's most famous clubs will be holding a club reunion this Saturday

night.

The Sutherland Sharks, who will next year be celebrating its 75th anniversary, is hosting a rare opportunity for the many thousands of players and supporters involved with the club over the years to meet up with old friends.

Comper for the night will be Andy Paschalidis with former Shark 1st Grader, Rugby Union International and renowned after-dinner speaker, John Lambie, as special guest.

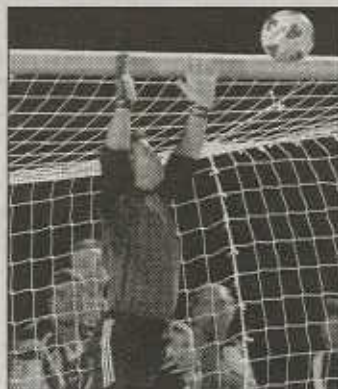
Cost is \$55 per head, which includes three-course meal, top class entertainment, lucky door prize, silent auction and major auction of top memorabilia.

The evening commences at 7pm and will be held at Cronulla Sharks Leagues Club Auditorium (Captain Cook Drive, Woollooware).

Also on display will be a large collection of memorabilia, photos and newspaper clippings from the 1930's to the present day.

Please RSVP by contacting Paul Smith on 9501 2203 or Ian Lloyd on 0419 013 933.

PREMIER LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK



GOALKEEPER:

Trinity Allen (Rockdale City Suns) – An excellent performance from the former A.I.S. graduate who held his back three together well with a solid display. Can not be blamed for either of the Blue Devils' goals, but snuffed out a number of other opportunities with his quick reflexes

DEFENDERS:

Daniel Borg (Parramatta Eagles) – Despite nursing a neck injury, 'Borgy' was at his best marshalling the Eagles back four. Although giving away a tough penalty on a challenge to Tayfun Devrimol, he came forward to score two of his side's goals from the penalty spot with consummate ease

David Brewer (Central Coast) – A solid performer at the back for the Coasties and was always willing to get forward and be an extra man in the midfield when required

Paul Wearne (Bankstown City) – Solid in defence for the Lions, he saved his side with some crucial tackles and challenges at vital stages

Robbie Hooker (A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt) – Mr Dependable for A.P.I.A. as they tried to clamber their way back after going two goals down against Bankstown City

MIDFIELDERS:

Chad Lewis (Penrith Panthers) – The best player on the park in the St George game as he stepped up to fill the boots of Connolly and Bennett and drive his side from the midfield



Ante Moric (Rockdale City Suns) – An excellent performance from Moric against Belconnen where he was a constant menace starting many of the Suns attacking raids from deep inside his own half

Luke O'Connell (Penrith Panthers) – Pushed into the unfamiliar role of midfielder, he rose to the occasion and alongside Chad Lewis pushed his young side to their best result all season.

Gabriel Mendez (St. George) – His distribution was again excellent, but his contribution was overshadowed by his teams loss

STRIKERS:

Luke Roodenburg (Blacktown City) – Tried very hard for Blacktown to bust their game open against Crescent Star, causing no end of problems for Crescent Star with a big physical presence

Steve Karavatakis (Canterbury-Marrickville) – Deserved his goal for Berries as he worked himself to a standstill, setting up other opportunities for his team mates



COACH:

Tony Rasmussen (Penrith Panthers) – Just when the Panthers were all but gone for the season, Rasmussen turns around and motivates his young side to become just one of just three teams to beat St George this season. The Panthers semi-finals campaign is alive and kicking!



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GRASS PROVES GREENER ON MOSS'S SIDE

By Paul Goodwin

Current Manly Warringah player and manager Phil Moss came back to haunt his former squad Fraser Park on the weekend, with a convincing 3-1 victory.

His side could not have given him a better start than to go three goals up in the first 15 minutes. Steve Berry and Brent Fisher were back after missing some recent matches and both players had a hand in the Dolphins' early lead.

All of the visitors' goals came from 'exquisite team work' according to Moss who was delighted to see Berry provide the finishing touches to a move in the 11th minute. Then Fisher netted the second two minutes later while a corner from Michael Williams in the 15th saw a Fraser Park defender put the ball into his own net under pressure from Roland Webber.

Tanju Balabanel reduced the arrears in the 28th minute and the game became a great contest from that point on as Fraser tried in vain to get the goals back that they had conceded early on. Fisher with a header and Rob Portelli, missed second half chances for Manly who defended very well to deny a rampant and determined Fraser. The 3-1 win gave Manly the lead from Fraser, the Dolphins managing this despite losing two of their first seven games.

But the action started way back on Easter Monday with Hurstville ZSC earning three valuable points from a gritty 2-1 win over a competitive Dulwich Hill at Hurstville Oval in the afternoon.

Hurstville opened the scoring in the 14th minute through Robert Babaic. Jusic got away down the right and aided by Michael Filipovic and Eddie Adam managed to get the ball across to Babaic whose finish was nicely controlled.

When the ZSC defence failed to clear in the 65th they

found themselves at a level pegging once more after Tallan Martin seized his opportunity and slotted the ball away.

Eleven minutes later Hurstville managed to regain the lead and go on and win the game.

The first-half had been somewhat uneventful but with Eddie Adam hitting the crossbar from another Jusic cross and a few other chances going begging.

In what was a more lively second period, it was relief that ZSC claimed the winner from big defender Joe Vrkic, who was able to slot the ball away after Steve Moskus's nod on at the near post from a corner.

Over at St Johns Park Hajduk Wanderers battled it out under the new Hajduk Stadium lights against Northern visitors, Manly Warringah Dolphins.

After a tight first-half in which neither side could gain the ascendancy, the Dolphins were able to take the lead midway through the second-half.

Matt Gale, the big man who had come on for Player-coach Phil Moss only half an hour into the game, won the ball well in the middle and found Steve Berry who was able to hold the ball up long enough to lay it off in the path of Mick Williams who slotted the ball beyond Daniel Schwarzer's right for the only goal of the game.

With ten minutes to go, Brendan Salameh also saw his shot cleared off the line and although Hajduk put pressure on Manly, they managed to salvage a point.

Wednesday night action came to Seymour Shaw Park for the second week in a row but this time instead of Premier League football we had Sutherland entertaining Sydney University in what promised to be a keenly contested Super League match.

Sutherland is one club that has not had much luck thus far. They had two of their first six games postponed and needed to catch up with this one as they also had a game against Stanmore Hawks.

They did look good in the early part of this game,

but the University boys also fought hard and Rob Smithies' first-half goal soon cancelled out the goal-scoring effort from the Sharks' stalwart, Iain Macdonald, whose flick over the advancing keeper, James Mayer had given his side the lead 20 minutes in.

Sharks' keeper Nathan Hughes had been beaten by Smithies in similar style and the teams had to start all over again to try and find a winner.

But when a ball was not cleared by the Sydney University defence in the 40th minute and the ball hovered in the air for some time, the alert Macdonald was able to send a looping header past the University keeper to restore the home side's lead.

In the second-half neither side could add to their tally, but a volley from Smithies did fly wide when the normally prolific marksman was well-placed to score.

Sydney University had to do without the injured Tim Wilson and the unavailable Adam Snyder, but they did have new signing, Josh Sama, coming off the bench that added some fire-power.

Despite Luke McDougall being pushed up from the back and Sama joining Smithies up front as well the students could not make any further impression.

"We were a bit flat tonight," University coach Stewart Porter said after the game.

"I'm not sure if it was the travelling, as some of our team had some distance to travel after work, or the affects of a hard game at the weekend. We never seem to do so well at Sutherland for some reason"

The win lifted the Sharks into contention for a top five spot after an indifferent start to the season.

On Saturday the Fairfield Bulls, who appeared to be moving along well after an uncertain start, tackled one of the more ambitious clubs in the Stanmore Hawks, meeting the Hawks at Cook Park Mt Pritchard due to Nineveh Field not being available until some time in May.

It was a scrappy game and Bulls' coach Hugh McCrory was the first to admit that his side played poorly and were luck to escape with a 3-2 win over the Hawks.

When Nenos Bobo was upended in the box in the 43rd minute Leigh Gunn was able to convert from the spot and put his side one goal up.

The visitors however, were able to fight back and lead with goals from Sam Awad and Neil Philippou, the first of those a penalty as well, in the 45th.

Philippou's goal had come seven minutes into the second half. Then Ghiso tidied up after a shot from Andy Amegashie had been only parried by the keeper in the 76th minute.

Skipper Ghiso then got the winner, in the 86th, also from the penalty spot, after Bobo had once more been brought down in the area.

"We were pretty bad, but I'll take the win," McCrory said as he headed off to a barbecue to celebrate with his family.

On Sunday Sutherland Sharks, winners midweek against the students, met the formidable Hajduk Wanderers United at Seymour Shaw.

Hajduk continued on their string of victories, winning by a slender 1-0 thanks to an early goal from Brendan Salameh. It was a result that could prove costly for the Sharks, come the season's end.

Fresh from their mid-week catch-up match against Sydney University and without experienced duo Dean Heffernan and Damon Collina, the Sharks struggled to penetrate the well-organised Wanderers defence.

Hajduk did make more in-roads but mostly on the counter-attack and only after that 28th minute goal by Salameh did the one goal advantage allow the Wanderers unit to sit deeper, forcing Sutherland to push numbers forward.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 7:

FIRST GRADE: Fairfield Bulls 3 (L Gunn 43m J Ghiso 76/86m) Stanmore Hawks 2 (S Awad 45m N Philippou 52m), MSC Liverpool 1 (E Williams 88m) Macarthur Rams 2 (N Vukosa 18m P Wither 86m), Dulwich Hill 1 (T Martin 39m) Hurstville City Minotaurs 3 (M Sarikakas 14m M Sulton 70m M Musumeci 84m), Northern Tigers 1 (T Nikulski 44m) Hurstville ZSC 4 (E Adam 20m D Jureta 80m R Babaic 84m A Jusic 87m), Sydney University 0 Ryde City 0, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Hajduk Wanderers United 1 (B Salameh 28m), Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 (S Berry 15m B Fisher 18m Own Goal 20m).

GRADE 20: Fairfield Bulls 2 Stanmore Hawks 0, MSC Liverpool 5 Macarthur Rams 1, Dulwich Hill 7 Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Northern Tigers 3 Hurstville ZSC 1, Sydney University 3 Ryde City 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 2, Fraser Park Dragons 1 Manly Warringah Dolphins 2.

RESCHEDULED FIXTURES: ROUND 1:

FIRST GRADE: Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 (I MacDonald 72/7m) Sydney University 1 (R Smithies 22m).

GRADE 20: Sutherland Shire Sharks 1 Sydney University 0.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 8:

FIRST GRADE: Schofields Scorpions 2 (A Murselovic 31m M Milas 50m) Hills United 4 (J Miller 19/89m L Quimou 68m T Bardsley 85m), Bathurst 75 1 (M Rooke 83m) Wollongong United 2 (R Todorovski 20m A Jomaa 65m), Belmore Hercules 0 Nepean Association 2 (C Lima 58m S Mort 89m), Fairfield City Lions 4 (H Bayhan 11m A Zmire 49m S Ersahin 75/80m) The Wanderers 2 (J Hurtado Pachec 20m C Olivares 53m), Liverpool Bossy 1 (N Codmani 15m) Mt Pritchard 0, Camden Tigers 2 (N Lazarus 80/89m) Western Rye 2 (M Demertjis 68/82m), White City 2 (J Zinjanin 34m Z Alavanja 76m) Mt Drutt Town Rangers 0.

GRADE 20: Schofields Scorpions 2 Hills United 1, Bathurst 75 4 Wollongong United 2, Belmore Hercules 0 Nepean Association 3, Fairfield City Lions 2 The Wanderers 6, Liverpool Bossy 1 Mt Pritchard 2, Camden Tigers 1 Western Rye 1, White City 2 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 3.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO - RD 4:

FIRST GRADE: Southern Star Sharks 3 Blacktown

Districts 3, Greystanes SC 2 (M Racker 18m A La Grazia 84m) Hawkesbury City 2 (E George 78m Own Goal 88m), Prospect United 0 Inter Lions 4 (L Sansone 5/64m L Wright 67m pen/90m), UNSW 2 (N Kodomichalos 23/73m) Hakoah 1 (A Joseph 20m), Greenisland SC 2 (D Georges 57/69m) Springwood SC 3 (M Kelly 14m C Johnson 21m P Fleming 34m).

GRADE 21: Southern Star Sharks 0 Blacktown Districts 4, Greystanes SC 1 Hawkesbury City 1, Prospect United 0 Inter Lions 5, UNSW 3 Hakoah 4, Greenisland SC 2 Springwood SC 1.

GRADE 19: Southern Star Sharks 0 Blacktown Districts 1, Greystanes SC 2 Hawkesbury City 2, Prospect United 1 Inter Lions 4, UNSW 3 Hakoah 2, Greenisland SC 3 Springwood SC 2.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: RD 4:

FIRST GRADE: Kellyville Kolts 0 Sydney Cedars SC 4, Gladesville United 1 Trasandinos 1, Earlwood Wanderers 0 Balmain SC 4, Gazy Lansvale 2 Roosters FC 1, Colo Colo 1 Lithgow Workmen 0, Sporting SCC 1 East Coast Magic 2.

RESERVE GRADE: Kellyville Kolts 2 Sydney Cedars SC 1, Gladesville United 2 Trasandinos 2, Earlwood Wanderers 1 Balmain SC 3, Gazy Lansvale 2 Roosters FC 1, Colo Colo 8 Lithgow Workmen 2, Sporting SCC 1 East Coast Magic 6.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE - ROUND 4:

FIRST GRADE: Macarthur Rams 3 (H Kerrigan 2m K Rockall 15m L Burns 67m) Wollongong Wolves 3 (K Lee 71/89m V Mann 74m), Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 (E Bates 56m) North West Sydney Koalas 4 (J Burgess 8/40m L Collins 11m H Todd 81m), Sutherland Association 1 Marconi 7, Nepean Association 0 NSW Academy 0, Bathurst City Panthers 2 (L Armstrong 17/78m) UNSW 1 (A Smith 39m).

GRADE 21: Macarthur Rams 1 Wollongong Wolves 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 North West Sydney Koalas 0, Sutherland Association 1 Marconi 2, Nepean Association 0 NSW Academy 7, Bathurst City Panthers 1 UNSW 3.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE - ROUND 4:

FIRST GRADE: Hawkesbury City 0 Blacktown Districts 3 (M Kast 15m L Sparkes 78m N Alexander 87m), Sydney University 5 (M Pennington 19/36/47m C Watt 28m P Kelly 82m) St George Association 2 (A Koncurat 38/41m), Gladesville Ravens 3 (M Corderoy

20/40m N Bohm 90m) Central Coast FC 4 (S Hockey 10m V Dashwood 30m N Mackie 63/80m), Southern Branch 6 (S Smith 1/32m A Hudson 52/40m F Boyd 84m K French 14m) Granville Rye 1 (K Bell 75m).

GRADE 21: Hawkesbury City 1 Blacktown Districts 3, Sydney University 2 St George Association 1, Gladesville Ravens 2 Central Coast FC 3, Southern Branch 5 Granville Rye 3.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 8:

GRADE 13: Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Shire 3, Gladesville Spirit SC 4 Newcastle United 2, Blacktown City Demons 4 Marconi Stallions 0, Sydney Olympic 0 Sydney United 2, Parramatta Eagles 0 Central Coast FC 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Wollongong Wolves 0, Hajduk Wanderers UTD 1 Bankstown City Cubs 0.

GRADE 14: Macarthur Rams 2 Sutherland Shire 5, Gladesville Spirit SC 0 Newcastle United 0, Blacktown City Demons 1 Marconi Stallions 1, Sydney Olympic 1 Sydney United 0, Parramatta Eagles 3 Central Coast FC 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2 Wollongong Wolves 3, Hajduk Wanderers UTD 3 Bankstown City Cubs 3.

GRADE 15: Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Shire 0, Gladesville Spirit SC 0 Newcastle United 2, Blacktown City Demons 1 Marconi Stallions 2, Sydney Olympic 2 Sydney United 0, Parramatta Eagles 3 Central Coast FC 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 Wollongong Wolves 1, Hajduk Wanderers UTD 0 Bankstown City Cubs 1.

GRADE 16: Macarthur Rams 1 Sutherland Shire 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Newcastle United 2, Blacktown City Demons 1 Marconi Stallions 0, Sydney Olympic 2 Sydney United 0, Parramatta Eagles 3 Central Coast FC 0, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Wollongong Wolves 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 UTD Bankstown City Cubs 5.

GRADE 18: Macarthur Rams 2 Sutherland Shire 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 4 Newcastle United 1, Blacktown City Demons 1 Marconi Stallions 6, Sydney Olympic 1 Sydney United 6, Parramatta Eagles 2 Central Coast FC 1, Hajduk Wanderers UTD 2 Bankstown City Cubs 2.

RESCHEDULED GAME: ROUND 7:

GRADE 18: Bankstown City Cubs 0 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 6:

GRADE 13: Southern Branch 4 Fairfield Bulls 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Penrith Nepean United 1 Fraser Park - Canterbury 1, Parramatta Star 4 St George 3, Granville Rye 4 Northern Tigers 0, Schofields Scorpions 0 Hills United 2.

GRADE 14: Southern Branch 0 Fairfield Bulls 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Penrith Nepean United 0 Fraser Park - Canterbury 0, Parramatta Star 1 St George 5, Granville Rye 1 Northern Tigers 0, Schofields Scorpions 2 Hills United 0.

GRADE 15: Southern Branch 4 Fairfield Bulls 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Penrith Nepean United 2 Fraser Park - Canterbury 0, Parramatta Star 2 St George 2, Granville Rye 0 Northern Tigers 1, Schofields Scorpions 2 Hills United 1.

GRADE 16: Southern Branch 0 Fairfield Bulls 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Penrith Nepean United 4 Fraser Park - Canterbury 1, Parramatta Star 2 St George 0, Granville Rye 2 Northern Tigers 1, Schofields Scorpions 3 Hills United 2.

GRADE 18: Southern Branch 1 Fairfield Bulls 3, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Penrith Nepean United 3 Fraser Park - Canterbury 0, Parramatta Star 9 St George 0, Granville Rye 1 Northern Tigers 3, Schofields Scorpions 2 Hills United 1.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: RD 6:

GRADE 13: Wollongong United 1 Bathurst 75 Western 0, Camden Tigers 4 Dulwich Hill 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 3, Belmore Hercules 4 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 1, Stanmore Hawks 2 Ryde City 3.

GRADE 14: Wollongong United 0 Bathurst 75 Western 1, Camden Tigers 0 Dulwich Hill 0, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0, Belmore Hercules 2 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 0, Stanmore Hawks 1 Ryde City 3.

GRADE 15: Wollongong United 1 Bathurst 75 Western 1, Camden Tigers 0 Dulwich Hill 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 1, Belmore Hercules 1 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 0, Stanmore Hawks 1 Ryde City 5.

GRADE 16: Wollongong United 0 Bathurst 75 Western 0, Camden Tigers 2 Dulwich Hill 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0, Belmore Hercules 1 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 0, Stanmore Hawks 2 Ryde City 4.

GRADE 18: Wollongong United 2 Bathurst 75 Western 6, Camden Tigers 4 Dulwich Hill 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0, Belmore Hercules 1 Mt Drutt Town Rangers 0, Stanmore Hawks 0 Ryde City 3.

S.S.J. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE:

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 1:

GRADE 12: Wollongong Wolves 3 Northern Tigers 5.

ROUND 6:

GRADE 12: Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 Blacktown Districts 0, Marconi 1 North West Sydney Koalas 8, Wollongong Wolves 0 Sutherland Association 10, Macarthur Rams 2 Central Coast FC 1, Nepean Association 4 UNSW 1, Southern Branch 0 Northern Tigers 0.

GRADE 14: Wollongong Wolves 0 Northern Tigers 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 Blacktown Districts 0, Marconi 0 North West Sydney Koalas 5, Wollongong Wolves 0 Sutherland Association 2, Macarthur Rams 3 Central Coast FC 1, Nepean Association 6 UNSW 0, Southern Branch 2 Northern Tigers 0.

GRADE 16: Wollongong Wolves 1 Northern Tigers 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 5 Blacktown Districts 0, Marconi 1 North West Sydney Koalas 2, Wollongong Wolves 1 Sutherland Association 4, Macarthur Rams 1 Central Coast FC 0, Nepean Association 8 UNSW 0, Southern Branch 9 Northern Tigers 0.

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN

LEAGUE - ROUND 3:

GRADE 11: Nepean Association 0 Granville Association 3, Canterbury Association 2 Manly Warringah Association 1, Central Coast Association 1, Gladesville Hornsby Association 2, Eastern Suburbs Association 0 Ku-Ring-Gai Association 2, Bankstown Association 0 Southern Branch 0, Blacktown Association 0 Sutherland Association 1, Illawarra Association 0 Macarthur Association 0, St George Association 1 Southern Districts Association 1.

GRADE 12: Nepean Association 0 Granville Association 1, Canterbury Association 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 2, Central Coast Association 0, Gladesville Hornsby Association 3, Eastern Suburbs Association 3 Ku-Ring-Gai Association 0, Bankstown Association 4 Sutherland Association 0, Illawarra Association 1 Macarthur Association 3, St George Association 2 Southern Districts Association 0.

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SOCCER NSW MEMBERS TO HAVE A SAY

An Internet Poll and a series of Consultation Forums will give Soccer NSW members the chance to have a say on the State's bid for an Australian Premier League licence.

This follows the inaugural meeting of the Soccer NSW Bid Steering Committee & Task Force last week.

"This will be a team for the people, so we are going to ask the people what they think," said a Soccer NSW spokesman.

"To be a success, the Bid needs the backing of the soccer family so very early in the process we will be seeking the people's views and keeping them informed of the Bid's progress.

"I think the soccer family will be pleasantly surprised by the level of consultation."

The Internet poll will cover a wide range of topics, from the concept for a name and colors for the team to the type of venue and preferred match days.

On the back of the poll, Bid personnel will hold Forums for clubs and associations and players across NSW.

The results of the Internet Poll and Consultation Forums will be part of the key research in shaping the bid.

The Bid Chairman, Tom Doumanis, has reaffirmed the commitment to "no levies on members and no drain on Soccer NSW funds" in planning for an APL team.

Soccer NSW, like other potential bidders for APL licences, is awaiting the public release of the Expression of Bid document from the Australian Soccer Association which is expected this week.

Wednesday is the day the documents should be brought to the forum where we will see potential bids come from various sides from across Australia.

Last month, the ASA foreshadowed a mid-April release of the Bid documents, followed by a six-week period for Bids to be lodged.

The final decision on the eight successful bidders was set down for mid-July, giving the new teams six months to prepare for the "preview" season of the new national competition in January next year.

At this current stage, soccer supporters wait anxiously on what will happen and which clubs will appear in next season's Australian Premier League.

An eight-team league has been penned out however this could possibly change.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

By Almee Brown

The Arrive Alive NSW Women's Super League reconvened after a week's break over Easter with weather conditions at the weekend much improved since the last round, with everyone enjoying clear skies and warm temperatures.

A depleted NSW Academy travelled out to St Marys to face Nepean Association at Cook Park. The Academy were missing Sally Shipard, Leah Blayney, Julia Bazi, Renee Cartwright and Kylie Ledbrook who are currently on tour with the Young Matildas at the Oceania qualifiers for the FIFA U19 Women's World Championship, and as result many of the younger Grade 21 Academy players had to back up for two games.

There was a good crowd in attendance and the pitch was in excellent condition. The game began with Academy keeping the ball in their final third, but Nepean's defence would not allow them to follow through on any of their chances. However, Nepean came together and put some strong tackles on Academy, which managed to balance the game out, bringing the ball into their final third for a few good attempts at goal.

Both teams played exciting football, keeping the ball alive and working well together. In particular Nepean's goalkeeper, Crystal Murphy, had an outstanding game, making numerous strong saves.

In the 18th minute, Academy's Frances Dimino broke through Nepean's defence and had a one-on-one opportunity against Murphy. The tension was high, and it looked sure to be a definite goal opportunity, but Murphy executed a brilliant save and kept the visitors scoreless.

In the 30th minute, Nepean's Jessica Gough created a similar opportunity, moving deftly past the Academy defence, coming face to face with Academy's keeper. She shot from the right into the left hand side of the goal, but an excellent save from Academy's goalkeeper, Yasmin Favretti, meant that the score remained unchanged.

Dimino repeatedly brought the ball down from midfield for the academy, into the 18 yard box, creating many opportunities for goal, but unfortunately, none were forthcoming. On the Nepean side, Jessica Gough and Mel Lopes played the same role, creating much but not troubling the score keeper.

In the second half, Nepean really picked up and put the pressure on the Academy, pressing down into their final third. Both teams played hard and challenged each other, but neither side was able to penetrate the defence and score. It was a close and exciting game, with the Academy shining through tactically, while Nepean's strong defence enabled them to hold their own and a share of the

points.

The Macarthur Rams played at home game against the Wollongong Wolves and drew 3 all. The Rams dominated in the first half of the game, and by the break were up 2-nil. But after the break, the Wolves came back with renewed vigour and began to put pressure on the Rams. The Rams managed to hold their advantage for a while, and scored one more goal midway through the second half, but the Wolves put three in the goal in quick succession in the last 15 minutes of the game, bringing the score to 3-all.

The Manly Warringah Dolphins hosted the North West Sydney Koalas at Cromer and while both teams played a good game, the Koalas walked away with another win to add to their collection. This win places the Koalas firmly at the top of the ladder in the competition with maximum points from their 4 matches. The Koalas scored three goals in the first half, capitalising on their chances. The Dolphins also created some opportunities, but didn't manage to finish them. In the second half the Dolphins' game improved, and were able to put one goal away. But in the 81st minute, the Koalas put one more in and secured their victory.

The Marconi Stallions travelled down to the Harrie Denning Centre to play Sutherland Association. The Stallions were in excellent form and walked away with a huge 7-1 win with a hat-trick to Alicia Cavanagh and goals to Neisha Klessattel, Louise Ciabatti, Lisa Gilbert and Lisa Warrenner. The consolation goal for Sutherland coming from former matildas, Julie Murray, who converted a well placed free-kick.

It was a hard game for Sutherland, who due to injuries, had five players double up and play in the First Grade from the Grade 21's. Sutherland had difficulty penetrating the Stallions' defences, and therefore weren't able to create many opportunities. The Stallions played an outstanding attacking game and followed through on their chances. This huge win places them second on the ladder in the competition.

The Bathurst City Panthers had a home game victory against UNSW, winning 2-1. It was a close match, and a good one to watch with both teams playing a tight game. The Panthers produced the performance that they have been threatening to over the past couple of games, and managed to finish the limited chances that they created. UNSW also played a strong game, proving their new position in the Arrive alive NSW Womens Super League.

The Panthers scored one goal midway through the first half, and UNSW equalised just before half time, from a corner. But a goal in the 78th minute secured a win and the points for Bathurst.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE

By Almee Brown

In the Arrive Alive NSW Women's State league, Blacktown Districts had a 3-0 victory in their local derby against Hawkesbury City at Bensons Lane Reserve. Blacktown played a strong game and supported each other well. Blacktown's Melanie Kast scored early in the first half, setting the tone of the game.

Hawkesbury's goal keeper made a few excellent saves early on in the game, but all that changed in the second half. The score remained at one-nil until the final ten minutes of the game, where Blacktown put two away in quick succession. Unfortunately Blacktown's Linda Kondek sustained a significant knee injury during the game and will be out for five weeks after just returning from a hamstring injury.

Sydney University played a home game against St George, winning 5-2. Both teams felt the pressure as it was a grand final rematch. It was a very physical game and both teams put in a strong effort. Uni dominated early, and were up three-nil, but just before half time St George came back and scored two quick goals. However, after the break, Uni pulled their game together and put away two more goals, securing them a win. This win places them on the top of the table in the competition.

Central Coast United played Gladesville Ravens at Peel Park and won 4-3. It was an exciting game to watch, with both teams playing well. Both teams were relegated last year, and they are both strong but developing teams. The match was very close, with both teams capitalising on their chances and playing together well. The score was two-all at half time, which reflects the closeness of the match. Central Coast had marginally more ball possession, and secured two more goals in the second half. The Ravens put one more in, but Central Coast walked away with the win.

Southern Branch played Granville Rage at South Nowra Fields and utilised their home ground advantage, achieving a huge 6-1 win. Despite the large goal margin, it was a well-played game by both teams. Granville also created many opportunities, but did not manage to follow through on them. Granville was also hindered by a few injuries obtained earlier in the week, and consequently had about five players who were forced to play two games back to back. Southern Branch played an excellent game, and are a well drilled, well organised squad. Southern Branch put away four goals in the first half, and then one more early in the second half. Midway through the second half, Granville managed to put one away, but southern Branch responded by scoring a final goal in the 84th minute.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE

(Continued from page 22)

Salameh's goal was the first real chance of the game and coming a third of the way in it was evidence of the paucity of goalmouth action throughout.

The goal came after good work down the right from George Issa and saw the ball played square in behind the Sharks defence where Salameh was left with an easy finish past the exposed keeper, Nathan Hughes.

Struggling Liverpool met one of their nearest neighbours, Macarthur Rams, at Hammondville Oval with Paul Carter's men keen to move away from the nether regions of the ladder. It was not a good day for MSC whose coach Paul Carter is promising that some hard decisions will be made before next weekend's game.

His Liverpool side fell behind to a Male Vukosa strike 18 minutes in and his side only went further behind in the 86th minute, thanks to a Paul Wither goal.

Eric Williams scored what proved to be a consolation goal in the 88th after a break on the right where Ben Realph pushed the ball through to his senior team mate.

Dulwich Hill came head to head with Peter Sarikakis' Hurstville City Minotaurs at Henson Park.

Manuel Sarikakis gave the visiting Minotaurs the lead in the 14th minute and former Football Kingz man Tallan Martin levelled for the Hill men in the

39th.

It was gripping stuff after that but the Hurstville side managed to score next and added a third even later, newcomer Musemici in the 84th completing the story once Modar Sultan had netted his side's second in the 70th minute.

Newly promoted Northern Tigers, who have made a steady if unspectacular start to their first Super League campaign had former First Division rivals, Hurstville ZSC as their opponents at Parklands Oval.

There was nothing in it until Hurstville coach John Gagro threw on big defender Daniel Jurleta whose very presence seemed to spur his side to action. Three goals in a crazy last ten minutes saw Hurstville go onto win 4-1.

Sydney University, whose midweek narrow loss at Sutherland only galvanised them into a more competitive frame of mind, tackled an improving Ryde City on campus at Sydney University Oval.

In the 16th minute Oliver Skelding got up well on the right and hit a scorching ground pass which University keeper James Meyer did very well to intercept.

In the second-half Ryde got back into the game and in the first 15 minutes Baveas, Damian Pisano, and Greg Fuchs all got themselves into shooting positions but were unable to find target. The game ended in a scoreless draw.



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